

TEEVADHARA

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THE IMAGE OF MAN IN WORLD RELIGIONS

IMAGE OF MAN IN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

J. B. Chethimattam

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The Meeting of Religions

THE IMAGE OF MAN IN WORLD RELIGIONS

Editor :

John B. Chethimattam

Theology Centre
Alleppey 688 001
Kerala, India

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Editorial

We are living in an age of humanism. Even in the midst of the most astounding scientific discoveries and technological progress world interest is waning in these achievements of man, and is focusing more on man himself, and the meaning of his life. Science has indeed succeeded too well. By succeeding so well science has shown how trivial it is in the overall perspective, and even dangerous since it could by an odd mistake destroy man himself, and naturally enough a section of humanity has lost hope. Relying on science and technology alone one cannot find a meaning for human life higher than that of what man produces. At this critical period of world history the world Religions with their primary objective of studying man and his final happiness could make a great contribution to human thought. Hence this issue dedicated to a study of the image of man in the world Religions.

We present in an introductory article the positive elements of this image of man in which all the world Religions seem to agree in spite of their diversity of approaches. Against this common image of man presented by the world Religions the special emphases given to certain dimensions of man by the particular religious traditions come to relief. Fr Lucius Nereparampil examines the image of man in the Bible, and Thomas Kochumuttom the dynamic idea of man as presented in the *Rg Veda*. The *Dharmaśāstras* present man as subordinate to the rules and regulations of moral life, and this is the point of view from which T. M. Manickam studies man.

But more important for our secularized age are the more recent images of man. Among these the picture of man painted by Guru Nanak several centuries ago has a contemporary relevance. According to him the task of religion is not to discuss God or gods in a theoretical and ritual context, but to face the worldly problems of man with all the help that faith in God can

provide. This contribution of Guru Nanak and Sikhism is studied by Jose Kuriedath. In this religious discussion of man the contributions of modern science and even of the modern rebels against religion are not irrelevant. Dr T. M. Thomas presents us with man as seen through the modern scientific theories of evolution, while Dr Norbert Klaes studies the contribution of the "New Left" in building up a new image of man.

The study of man is a subject in which the researches and insights of philosophy and religion, sociology, psychology, anthropology and even archeology can converge. But religion touches the deepest dimension of man in his openness to the Supreme Reality, and in this the reflections of different religions can be positively helpful in attaining an adequate understanding of man.

Dharmaram College,
Sept. 1, 1974.

Dr John B. Chethimattam.

Image of Man in Religion and Philosophy

Philosophy deals with the ultimate causes of things through reason. Religion is the science of the ultimate and supreme Reality, the ultimate concern and meaning of human life. But in both man the seeker of truth stands in the centre of the stage. Though the object of the search is the ultimate cause and supreme reality they are man's search and hence a phenomenon more human than divine. Philosophy may appear a detached search into the nature and cause of all things and an investigation of all ultimate problems, still the history of human thought shows that the starting point, the proper method of approach and the actual solutions were always adapted and attuned to the actual human needs of the times. Similarly religion may be properly understood only if it is placed against its proper human and cultural setting as a force that takes into account the actual needs and shapes individuals and societies accordingly. As E. O. James remarks religion assigns man his place in the universe, supplies him with a means for making contact with and deriving strength from the ultimate realities that determine his destiny and provide him with a value system.¹

1. Man and Philosophical Thought Forms

Man's actual attitudes shaped his philosophies. As is shown in the papers that follow, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Greeks and the Hebrews had their own peculiar historical and socio-cultural contexts in which their philosophical systems developed. They developed their own distinctive views on man. But at the same time their specific view of man and of human life determined the physiognomy of their philosophies.

According to Plato philosophy starts with wonder and man is a contemplator of the world of reality. This world of beings presents a certain hierarchy with the Supreme Being, one, beauti-

1. *Comparative Religion*. London: Methuen, 1961 p. 33.

ful and good at the top, gods and men in the middle and the material world at the bottom. Man's task was to purify his vision as well as his life through prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude and ascend to the contemplation of the subsistent, supreme Good. Moral life was guiding oneself unswervingly to this final end through the host of intermediary and immediate goals.

The Chinese thinking began in an optimistic view of man and human life and its endeavour was to discover the core of that goodness in the essential nature. This nature had its authentic model in Heaven, was handed down through family and ancestral tradition and had to be maintained through constant predeliction for the Mean between the extremes.

The suffering arising from misery and ignorance was the point of departure in philosophy for the Indian sages who lived in the thick jungles of the Indo-Gangetic plain. This pathetic view of man started a search for true knowledge and discernment so that the extraneous sources of human misery which clouded the vision of man may be distinguished from the authentic self of man. Taking for granted the unity of all beings in one, absolute and authentic inner self it sought to withdraw and gather back into that inner centre the dissipated consciousness of man, through *tapas* or austerities leading to concentration.

The Hebrews leading a nomadic life in the desert had no one else to face and to depend upon except a personal God. Hence their philosophical attitude was defined by this person to person encounter with God, for which the world was a meeting place. In such a perspective even the laws of nature were personal precepts from the heavenly father, and the observance of moral laws was obedience to him. The final goal of man was the reward for good behaviour, a hearty and joyful welcome to the father's home.

Thus the philosophical issues and the methodology itself were dictated by the actual concerns of man. Today with the great strides made by science and technological progress the quality of human life and man's conception of himself have radically changed. This has created a radical revolution in philo-

sophical thinking too. Today's philosophies seem to have very little in common with Platonism, Aristotelianism and other classical schools of thought which guided human lives more than two millennia. Today man does not look at himself as a product and part of nature, but as facing it in order to shape and guide it according to his needs. Existentialism, Phenomenology, Personalism and other brands of contemporary philosophy look at man as standing up alone in the midst of other things, thrown there as it were from nowhere, with them, but apart from them, alone capable of self-consciousness and self-direction. His search is no longer for the true and good, but for the valuable, that which can deepen his own awareness of himself and improve the quality of his life.

2. Man in Primitive Religion

The very beginning of religion was from man's self-understanding. Man came to understand his own personal nature by contemplating nature and endowing it with personal life as a model for himself. This animistic belief in spiritual beings is the minimal definition of religion. It started from, and later led to a deeper understanding of, the distinction of the human soul from the body. Thus according to primitive Animism every man has two things, namely, a life and a phantom. The sun, moon and stars, trees, rivers, winds and clouds became personal animate creatures; from the crowd of these indwelling spirits arose the Gods. Ancestor worship was an extension of it, since the remarkable men among the rest, the remotest ancestor and anything out of the ordinary came to be considered supernatural.

Animatism went a step further and recognized in this animate universe certain forces beneficial to man and responsive to his needs. Religion is wider and in certain respects vaguer than 'the belief in spiritual beings'². As Rudolf Otto says religion is not reducible to any ordinary intellectual or rational 'Knowing.' It is a unique, original and feeling response arising out of the depth of the human existence. It is the realization of the 'numinous', a transcendental presence standing over against the indi-

2. Cf. Marelt. *Threshold of Religion*, London : 1914, XXXI.

vidual self-consciousness.³ That transcendental reality is at the same time fascinating and awesome, lovable by its benevolence to man and threatening by its transcendence.

All the time concern is about man himself and his needs. Faith and practice are always definitely connected with the preservation of life values, success, happiness and long life. Man's main link with his environment is food. "By receiving it he feels the forces of destiny and providence."⁴ But as E. O. James pointedly remarks, this religious response is not blind. At no time is reason completely excluded from the picture. "The Savage and the civilized alike are at once rational and mystical in their outlook and reaction to their environment according to the particular circumstances of a given situation."⁵

3. Man in World Religions

Progress in the history of humanity and the refinement of his culture have not affected this central position of man in religion. The major religions of humanity known as the world Religions continue to focus their attention on man himself.

1) Though religion is the science of the transcendent, the holy, the divine, the other, still, this transcendent reality is immanent in human hearts. God is close to every one and dwells in the hearts of man. St Augustine felt that God is more inward than his inmost being.⁶ "God is nearer than our very pulse," says the Koran.⁷ The highest religious realization of Hinduism is "*Aham Brahmasmi*", "My self is Brahman."⁸ As R. M. Bucke says for man in his Cosmic Consciousness, the deepest experience of the world for man is "that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love."⁹

3. *Idea of the Holy*, Oxford, 1928, pp. XVI, 7., 15 ff., 36 ff.

4. Malonowski. *Science Religion and Reality* : London, 1927. p. 42.

5. *Com. Religion*. p. 56. 6. Confessions III. 6.

7. 50., 16. 8. Brih. Upanishad. I. IV 10.

9. *Cosmic Consciousness*, New York : E. P. Dulton, 1966 (23rd edi.) pp. 9 - 10.

2) This ultimate Reality is the focal point of man's quest. The Katha Upanishad takes Om as the symbol of this absolute:

"That word which all the Vedas declare, which all the austerities proclaim, desiring which people live the life of a religious student, that word is Om.

That is the imperishable Brahman, that is the imperishable highest goal, knowing which syllable, whatever a man desires becomes his."¹⁰

According to the Vedantic thinkers the noblest pursuit in life that culminates and transcends all other religious exercises is the intense desire to know Brahman.¹¹ The whole world, its origin, subsistence and dissolution, are a pointer towards that ultimate Reality. But this Reality, subtler than the subtle and greater than the great is set in the heart of every creature.¹² He is the light that illumines every man that comes into the world.¹³ The sun, the moon, stars, lightning and fire itself do not shine by themselves; everything shines only after that shining light. His shining illumines all the World¹⁴. The world is conceived as a tree rooted in God, growing downwards. It completely rests in God¹⁵.

Contemporary religious thinking has a certain aversion to these traditional ideas of absolute transcendence of God and man's total dependence on the Supreme Being. The concept of the totally other and sacred creates an unapproachable area within his own life and leads to a sense of alienation. Similarly the fact of total dependence on the other is a challenge to his own creative freedom. But this does not mean that religion is not a basic dimension of human life. Rudolf Otto's 'tremendum' and 'fascinans' have been replaced by the modern man's felt need for conversion and reconciliation. Even those who reject classical religions feel a need to listen, to be disturbed by what is communicated to them. They spontaneously feel that their perception of truth may be obscured by a blind spot in them. So they feel a need to be converted.

10. Katha Up. I, 15-16.

11. Vedanta Sūtras I, i, 1. 12. Katha Up. I, 2, 20.

13. Jo. 1.

14. Mund. Up. II, 2, 10; Katha Up. II, 2, 15; Bh. Gita. XV, 12..

15. Cf. So. Up. III, 9; Maitri VI, 4; Katha Up. II, 3, 1.

Similarly today man craves for reconciliation. Splits and conflicts appear a blot on humanity itself. Hence class and colour distinctions and economic and cultural inequalities are not readily taken for granted today as they were in the past. Contemporary man unconsciously feels that these are deep wounds in humanity itself and so have to be healed. This spontaneous craving for conversion and reconciliation in fact stems from the deep set sense of a ground of being that attracts man from within, and seeks to help him and heal his wounds.

3) The scope of this search for God arising out of the depth of human existence itself is the salvation and liberation of man. The Supreme is the mode and goal of man's striving for perfection. "Be Ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,"¹⁶ said Christ in his Sermon on the Mount. Attainment of infinite knowledge and infinite power was the goal Sri Mahavira set for his followers. According to Sri Gautama Buddha "What is not the eternal is not worthy of man's rejoicing, not worthy that man should welcome it nor turn to it."¹⁷

Hence all the world Religions emphasize the way of sacrifice. The way to religious fulfilment or salvation is through the sorrowful renunciation, ethical discipline and conversion. Both Sanskrit *tapas* and Greek *metanoia* mean a gathering back of man's dissipated powers and a concentration of energy on his ultimate concern. It is a going beyond the limitations and particularities of immediate concern to the ultimate and infinite. Man wants to go beyond the restrictions of space and time. This can be achieved only by embracing the All. "Whoso thus knows that he is Brahman becomes this All", said the Brihadarnyaka Upanishad.¹⁸ According to Kaushitaki Upanishad, *satyam*, Reality, embraces both the Absolute and the finite in a unity.¹⁹ Only by breaking open the confines of our individual existence may the plenitude of the Supreme be experienced. The Hindus speak of the example of the drop of water that merges into the Ocean. This has been sometimes interpreted as Hindu pantheism. The whole question is whether one wants to emphasize the drop in the water or the water in the drop. The egoist who is preoccupied

16. Matt. 17. Magghima Nik. II, 263. 18. 1, 4, 10.

19. Kaushi. Up. I, 6.

with his individuality is like the man who wants to keep constantly in view the diminutive dimensions of the drop of water. If we keep the drop apart from the water surrounding it only its limitations are emphasized. But in fact the water in the drop is the essential thing. There is no difference between the water in the drop and the water in the ocean. The ideal of religious penance and sacrifice is that one should lift one's eyes from the limitations of individuality and emphasize the selfhood and consciousness that make man what he is. Svetasivatara Upanishad puts it rather strongly: "Think of this living self as only a part of hundredth part of the tip of a hair, divided a hundred times! And still, to infinity is it conformed."²⁰

What makes this losing oneself in the infinite really meaningful for man's self is the fact that what he loses in truth are his chains, what restricts and confines his noblest inner perfection. In the absolute one sees All. This is not a mechanical fusion, but a union on the highest spiritual level, love, the realization that one's real self and centre is the divine All! Christ himself said: Any one who wants to save his life will lose it; but any one who loses his self for my sake will find it.²¹ Buddhism finds the essence of its religious insight in this losing of self, *nirvāṇa*. *Nirvāṇa* literally means a 'blowing out' of the flame. When a flame is visible it is only burning oil, flax, or something else. Only when it is blown out is the flame its authentic self. Life is a combination of sundry factors, and authenticity is the non-combined state of those elements. If life is thought of as a sickness, reality is the removal of that sickness. 'When life is looked upon as a mask one uses to hide one's identity, authenticity can only be the removal of that mask. Since all that we can conceive and think of are finite and transitory the authentic must be that emptiness resulting from the denial of all these finite aspects. "This is not I: this is not mine: this is not the self: this has nothing to do with a self"²² is the constant refrain of Buddhism.

4) But the positive contribution of world Religions to the image of man is their endeavour to answer the fundamental problems regarding the meaning of human life itself. The Declaration

20. 5, 9. 21. Matt. 16, 24 – 6.

22. Samyutta Noth. IV

of Vatican Council II on the Non-Christian Religions lists these problems: "What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgement, and retribution beyond the grave? What finally is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?"²³ All the different religions may not frame these questions in the same way or view them from an identical angle. But these questions indicate the total image of man which the different religions set out to explore. Even while discussing God or the ultimate ground of being their principal concern is the implied problem of man and the relevance of God for him. In all their diversity of belief, morality and cult there emerge certain positive elements in the image of man common to all religions. Man stands unique in the whole of nature as the leader and spearhead of the world's search for meaning, value and direction. So man himself is a mystery, a summary of all mysteries, the microcosm that contains in miniature all the hidden secrets of the universe. Hence self-knowledge is the starting point of all religious experience. 'Know thyself' is a religious precept, both Indian and Hellenist. This is not merely a mental disposition for approaching God, but an integral part of man's knowledge of God. To establish the God-man intimacy it is not enough to know God, but it is also necessary that man should be known by God; man should apprehend himself as known and created by God. Man is the crown of God's creation, his excellent handiwork in the world.

Man's Goal

Similarly important is the highest goal fixed for man, and the meaning assigned to his life by all religions in general: Man is called to attain the most intimate union with God, if not the realization of his identity with the divine reality outside of which there can be nothing. He is the spark of consciousness that can find full meaning only in the infinite consciousness of God. Sometimes this may appear as bordering upon pantheism. But this is

23. Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, I.

so only because one fails to understand the transcendence of the immanent and all embracing God. Only a God who is fully transcendent and remains beyond all categories can be also fully immanent, "*intimus intimo meo*", of Augustine. The divinity to which man aspires is not any duplicate or imitation divinity. An imitation divinity is no divinity at all. Only when one knows and acknowledges that he is nothing in himself and by himself can he stand before God as a child and receive the total self-gift of divine nature as from a father. St Paul quotes with approbation the Greek philosophers Ephimenides and Arta to show the excellent status of man: "God is not far from any one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being' and even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'"²⁴

Inwardness of Man

This goal-directedness of man to the Supreme Real which is both transcendent and immanent at the same time, emphasizes also the deep inwardness of man. According to Teilhard de Chardin the consciousness and inwardness of an organism increase in proportion to its complexity. Man is the most complex organism in nature and so is also the most self-conscious. In a sense consciousness transcends all the levels of complexity. For the Greeks man is the contemplator and his spiritual capacity is to rise from the tasks of this practical world through the theory of philosophy to theology, a conscious vision of the Supreme. The Upanishadic view of the *Kośas* or sheaths of personality looks at the self as the 'I' that remains within and beyond the physical, biological, emotional, cognitional and volitional levels of existence and consciousness: Even though 'I' can be noted as an integral part of the statements, 'I see this table', 'I am fat', 'I feel pain', 'I know' and 'I am happy', still the 'I' stands as the inmost and transcendental 'self' to which all these conscious acts are referred.

Ethical Image

Since man's self is the master of all that he has and is, he is also ethical and responsible. A great part of the teaching of religions concerns the ethical responsibility of man. This ethical concept is shaped by the image of man presented by the religious

tradition. Thus the three complementary religions of China; Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, presented man as an individual, as the member of a harmonized society and as an integral unit of the cosmos. So their ethical systems also placed the emphasis on man's personal responsibility for his actions, or in his fidelity to the rules of the society or to his conformity to the law of heaven. These are complementary views of human life and man's moral obligations. Man can be viewed in isolation or in unity with other men and nature itself. In isolation his good will and natural authenticity are the guiding principles. To be true to his authentic nature he should not be carried away by ignorance, passion, and petty interests of the passing moment, but have in view the binding ideal of his human self which is the basis of the law of love.²⁵ In this case sin will be the violation of man's authenticity. On the other hand man may be taken as a citizen, the member of a community, and then ethics will be obedience to the rules prescribed for the harmonious working of the community. Aristotle and the Greek tradition in general viewed man as a maker and proposed a teleological ethics: Man's activities for realizing the fullness of nature and morality is the conformity of man's self and that of the world to a preestablished image.

But when we consider man in interaction with other men and with his whole environment the ethics of responsibility proposed by Richard Niebuhr may look significant. Every moral action is a conscious reaction by man to what happens to him, a response to an action on him. Even on the religious level moral action comes as a human response to God's actions.²⁶ But if the existential reality of man is taken into account morality should be defined "as the self-affirmation of our essential being" in the words of Paul Tillich. Right and wrong, good and bad are judged not in isolation, but according to the participation in a higher existence, a reality that transcends even the sphere of moral commands.²⁷

Religion and the Misery of Man

All religions have to face in one way or another the problem of suffering. The miserable condition of man bound in ignorance

25. Acts 17, 28.

26. Cf. Albert Knudrem. *The Principles of Christian Ethics*.

27. Cf. *The Responsible Self*, 1963.

and pain is the starting point for most religions, which appear as paths to liberation or salvation from the present condition of bondage. Man's suffering is often taken as his own creation, the seed left by his actions germinating and producing appropriate fruits, the prison in which man encloses himself, the divine path voluntarily adopted by him. But when a supreme creator and lawgiver is recognized man's suffering can be understood as the just punishment for his disobedience of the rules and regulations laid out for him. But a religious view of suffering is most consoling when it touches upon the meaning of suffering. It first of all brings home to man that he is not absolute and independent but finite. Hence his happiness is not in remaining closed up in his limitations but in opening himself up to the Infinite. Secondly, it helps man to gather all his dissipated powers back into himself. A disappointing world outside leads to the search for the treasures of the inner world. Finally, it makes him conscious of his inalienable and indestructible identity. Even if he were to lose everything he had and even if the whole world were to be against him, he would remain himself. It is in his aloneness that he is mostly himself. Hence the climax of human suffering, death, is by no means a simple tragedy. It is the moment when one can take his whole self in his hand. There he realizes that his very being itself is open, open to the fullness of being in the transcendental being. Hence death comes to a religious man as conscious self-surrender to his own fullness in the absolute being.

Thus religions do not take man away from himself, but only reveal to him his own true image. Religious experience is not merely the experience of God but also an experience of man himself. When the touch of God is felt within one's self there is a new awareness of oneself as the experiencer of God. Here the object of experience is also the inner reality of man as the seeker of God. This awareness of oneself as the seeker of God places man on a higher plane than that of his original nude existence. In this experience of the divine which is picked out from a host of daily experiences provides also a new meaning to, and a new interpretation of one's own life, that of other men, of the whole world and of one's life in it. In this sense the religious outlook provides an exalted image of man, and for that matter one more authentic than philosophy or science could ever provide.

Dharmaram College
Bangalore.

J. B. Chethimattam

The Biblical Image of Man

What is man? This is a question that haunts the mind of modern man even after he has proved himself capable of even controlling the powers of nature. Approaching this problem from a thoroughly religious point of view, the Bible answers this question satisfactorily. In this article we try to discuss how the Judeo-Christian traditions have unfolded the mystery of man.

(i) Man as a Being Essentially Related to God

The anthropology of the book of Genesis projects man as a special being who is essentially and constantly related to God as regards his origin, life and destiny.

Man is a Creature of God: The Bible insists that man was created by God. It was through the breath of life which God "breathed into his nostrils" that he became a living being (Gen 2:7). Being made of clay, he is in the hands of God as a pot in the hands of the potter. God has complete dominion over him; if God takes away His breath, he would die.¹ For his happiness, obedience to the word of God is absolutely necessary. For, to the act of creation God has also added His Word that manifested His Will to man: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:16-17).

Man is the Image of God: Unlike the other beings of the universe man was created in the image and likeness of God.² This special privilege of man of having the image and likeness of God does not consist in the fact of his having a body, which is common to the animals too, but of having a spirit endowed with intellect and free will. According to the Jahwistic tradition, only in the case of man in the act of creation did God breathe into his body the breath of life; this breath of the spirit of life is not

1. Cf. Ps. 104:29.

2. Cf. Gen. 1:26f.; 5:1; 9:6.

mentioned in the creation of the animals.³ Man, therefore, has a unique relation to God which the rest of creation do not have. This unique, essential and constant relatedness of man to God proclaims the truth that religion is not something later added from outside to man's already existing human nature, but something that belongs to his very origin and nature.

Man is Flesh: According to the Bible, man is "flesh". It signifies that man by his creaturely existence is mortal, weak, imperfect and subjected to suffering and ignorance.⁴ The Hebrew "flesh" (*basar*) differs from the Greek "flesh" (*sarx*) in so far as the former signifies the whole man, while the latter denotes only a component part of man.⁵ This difference is due to the difference of Semetic and Greek thought patterns. The Greeks conceive everything according to the dichotomy of matter and form, while the Semetic mind conceives it in its totality and always in their relationship with God as their creator. For the Hebrews, therefore, the term "flesh" signifies man himself in his frailty, creatureliness and corporeal existence.⁶

Man is a Living Soul: According to Semetic anthropology, man is not only flesh but also soul (*nephesh*). Here the term *nephesh* should not be understood according to the Greek concept as a counterpart of the body together constituting man, but according to the Semetic thought as the whole man in his spiritual aspect. When God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, he became a living *nephesh*.⁷ *Nephesh* may mean also breath.⁸ The breath that God breathed into the first man may be the same as the soul in its modern understanding. For, it is the *nephesh* that departs at death.⁹ It is nothing but the breath which is the life

3. Cf. *ibid.* 2:7, 19.

4. Cf. Ps. 78:38; Is 40: 6-8 Eccl. ch. 1; 12:7; Job 5:7; 8:7; Ps 39:4f.; 62:9; 90; 103:14; 144:4; 146:3f.

5. Cf. Gen 29:14; 37:27; Ex 20:32; Lev 15:7; 14:9; 16:4; Is 58:7; Jdg 9:2; 2 Sm 5:1; 19:13.

6. Cf. Gen 6:3; Ps 55:4; 77:39; Is 31:3; Jr 17:13; Dan 2:11; Pr 5:11; Sir 23:16.

7. Gen 2:7. 8. Cf. Job 41:21.

9. Cf. Gen 35:18; Job 11:20.

principle of man which God has communicated to the "flesh" as a spiritual element opposed to the materiality of the "flesh".¹⁰ Sometimes this spiritual element of man is expressed by the term "spirit" (ruah).¹¹ This again seems to be the same as the breath of God which He had breathed into the body of man (Gen 6:3; Ps 104:29). It is nothing but the soul that vivifies the body.¹²

Thus the Bible draws the picture of man as having a material aspect with his weak, mortal flesh on the one side, and as having a spiritual aspect with his soul, spirit or breath which he specially received from God on the former.

Man as the Head of Creation: The Bible presents man as the head of creation. According to the creation account of the book of Genesis, God created first the inanimate world, then the living beings, and at the end as a crowning act He created man (Gen. ch. 1). After having created man and woman, He blessed them and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). From this it is clear that in the creation of man, God had the definite purpose to make him the head of the whole creation.¹³

This is also evident from the fact that God, after having created the living animals, brought them all before the man and made him give names to them.¹⁴ According to the Semetic concept, a name expresses the person or the thing itself, consequently to do something about the name, was to have a hold on that person or thing itself. Hence, by naming the living beings, the first man was exercising his sovereignty over them and thus over the whole creation.

Man is, therefore, authorized to bring the nature under control. At the same time he has also a responsibility of guarding and developing God's beautiful creation. For, "The Lord

10. Cf. Gen 2:7; Eccl 8:8; 12:7; Job 12:10; 27:2-3; 33:4.

11. Job 12:10; Is 57:16. 12. Cf. Num J6:22.

13. Cf. Gen 1:26. 14. Gen 2:19f.

God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15).

Man is a Child of God: The priestly account of creation emphasizes that man was created in the likeness of God.¹⁵ This image and likeness which man possesses, show that he has a close relationship with God which is similar to that of a son to his father.¹⁶ As a good child of God man has to show the image of God in his own person by participating in God's activity of creation as well as of lordship over the universe.¹⁷

The Jahwist account of creation describes the relationship of God with man as the loving gesture of a father towards his child. God creates a paradise and everything therein to make man, his new child, happy.¹⁸ As a father He tells him what to eat and what not to eat.¹⁹ As a good father, He thinks of giving him a companion, and He acts accordingly to make him perfectly happy. The fact that God could find a fitting companion for man not among the animals but only in the woman whom God created in a special way from man's own bone and flesh shows that both man and woman have a state which is higher than that of the animals.²⁰ Even after the fall of man, God continued to show his loving gesture towards man exactly as a good father would do to his children. For, "He made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (Gen 3:21). Thus the Bible presents man as a child of God, of whom God has always great concern and care.

(ii) The Fallen Man

The Bible does not fail to take the present state of man into account. Again and again it projects the fact of man's sin which is very important to explain his present state of suffering. Man has already disfigured his God-given image through his sin. Now he experiences a disunity in himself as well as in the world around him. It is not the good which he wants that he does, but the very evil which he does not want.²¹ Man is turned against his fellow-men. Cain turned to be an enemy of his brother Abel and murdered him (Gen 4:8). Strifes and wars are the daily

15. Gen 1:26-27. 16. Cf. Gen 5:3. 17. Cf. Gen 1:26ff.

18. Gen 2:8f. 19. Gen 2:17. 20. Gen 2:18-23. 21. Rom 7:15

experiences of mankind. Man is subjected to indescribable suffering and death. The Bible sees them all as the result of sin, which is nothing but man's alienation from God through his self-seeking.

(iii) The Exodus Image of Man

In the Exodus event, the Bible presents us man's image from outside. It is a pilgrim image of man who returns to God. Here of course, the initiation is from God. He feels pity on man and comes down to deliver him from his state of oppression.²² Man, however, responds to God's call and goes after Him.²³ It is a leap into darkness; it is his self-surrender to God in faith; it is a wandering in the wilderness, a going in search of God, a going to learn of God more intimately. In that attempt he would, of course, confront with uncertainties, suffering and dangers to his own existence, and might reach even the edge of complete desperation. But then God would intervene in history on his behalf and would strengthen him in his life of faith and hope.²⁴ Never should man remain idle, but has to keep on proceeding to "the promised land" with the light of faith and the certainty of hope. He should regulate his life according to the ordinances of God.²⁵ Thus he has to remain a man always related to God.

(iv) Man's Image from Within

The book of Psalms presents us man's image from within. It is an image of man who is in intimate communion with God. He pours out his soul to God in prayers and hymns. He praises God as his creator and saviour. He acknowledges and proclaims that it is God who created him and the whole universe around him.²⁶ He meditates upon nature and praises God as its creator and preserver.²⁷ He also reflects on the salvific activity of God on his behalf as well as on behalf of the whole community to which he belongs, and he praises and thanks God for

22. Cf. Ex 3:7-10. 23. Cf. Ex 12:37-18:27.

24. Cf. Ex 15:22-27; 16:1-36; 17:1-7.

25. Cf. Ex 22:22-23:19

26. Ps. 99:3,5; 33:3-9.

27. Ps 89:8-12; 74:13-17; 147:7-9; 111:4-5.

that.²⁸ His heart is full of gratitude, and he invites all his fellow-men to join him to thank God: "Oh! give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures for ever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south" (Ps 107:2-3).

From his distress and suffering, the interior man would raise his cry to God his creator and redeemer. In the face of death and sickness, he is helpless; the suffering caused by the malice of men terrifies him. In such difficult situations, he would not fall into utter desperation, but would pray with deep feelings of confidence and humility to God as a child would do to its loving father. For, he knows that "The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Ps 34:18). So he would pray with confidence: "But thou, O God my Lord, deal on my behalf for thy name's sake; because thy steadfast love is good, deliver me! For I am poor and needy" (Ps 109:21-22).

The prosperity of the evil-doers and the suffering of the righteous remained as a riddle to the interior man. But at the end he would understand that the earthly prosperity of the wicked was not lasting, and that the righteous would be rewarded with a glorious life after death.²⁹

The interior man finds all his happiness in God, and he always seeks after Him: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple... Thy face, Lord, do I seek" (Ps 27:4,8).

Thus the book of Psalms projects an image of man from within. Here man fully acknowledges his creaturely existence before God and proclaims Him as his creator and saviour. Even in the midst of suffering and distress he does not lose heart; but instead, he grows strong in faith and hope. So he prefers God to everything else in this universe, and in Him alone he seeks the solution for all his problems.

28. Ps 136:4-7, 10, 13, 16, 17, 25; 146:7-9.

29. Cf. Ps 73; 59.

(v) **Jesus Christ the Perfect Image of God in whom Man's Image is Completed.**

The New Testament sees the highest point of human evolution in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God.

The Synoptics view man as a creature completely dependent on God, but having a value greater than that of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.³⁰ In the case of man God takes greater care than He would do in the case of other beings.³¹ But man always turned his back on God and went his own way.³² Under the grip of sin he is burdened with the weakness of his flesh.³³ In order that he may be freed from that bondage of sin and to enter the free Kingdom of God, a conversion is essential for him.³⁴ It is in that Kingdom that came down in Jesus the Saviour that man regains his true image and happiness.

St Paul, following the Old Testament, views man as a sinner or as the one who is under the power of sin, and points out Jesus Christ as the embodiment of the perfect-man. Paul knows that all men have sinned and death spread to all men.³⁵ Before God all are alike. The difference comes only as far as they do good or evil; for every human being there will be tribulation and distress if he does evil, but glory and honour and peace if he does good.³⁶ Man is a creature of God, and as such he has no right to question God's complete dominion over him (Rom 9:20-21).

The mortal body of man, if it is under the reign of sin, will make man obey its passions; but if it is under the reign of grace, sin will have no power over him (Rom 6:12,14). Analysing man's nature Paul says that he is carnal, sold under sin. He does not understand his own actions. For, he does not do the good he wants, but the evil he does not want (Rom 7:14-20). Here we find a man divided in himself. This is the true picture of the fallen man. In him the desires of his flesh and the desires of his

30. Cf. Mt 6:26-30; 10:31 Mk 10:2-9.

31. Cf. Mt 5:45; 6:26; 10:30f. 32. Is 53:6. 33. Cf. Mk 14:38.

34. Cf. Mk 1:15. 35. Rom 5:12. 36. Rom 2:9-10.

spirit constantly make war against each other (Gal 5:17). Man plays the part of a double personality; he judges others, and does the same thing of which he accuses others (Rom 2:1,3).

Man is flesh as far as the evil tendencies of jealousy, strifes, immorality, impurity, licentiousness, enmity, anger, selfishness etc. make dominion over him (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 3:3). But man has a superior state through the grace of Jesus Christ. He is thus God's temple, and the dwelling place of God's Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16).

Through Jesus Christ, God has reconciled man with Himself. So, everyone who remains in Jesus Christ is a new creation (Cor 5:17-18). Thus man becomes an adopted son of God through Christ, and the Spirit of the true Son of God remains in him crying to God "Abba"! "Father" (Gal 4:4-7). If death came through the first man who sinned, resurrection from the dead came to all men through Christ the second Adam (1 Cor 15:20-1). The first man was from the dust of the earth, but the second man Christ is from heaven. Those who are of the dust are like the first man of dust, but those who are of a supernatural order bear the image of the man of heaven, and they will rise from the dead inheriting the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor 15:47-50).

This second type of renewed man has a steadfast and immovable character with a firm certainty of his future life (1 Cor 15:58; 2Cor 4:16-18; 5:1). He bears in himself interiorly the image of Jesus Christ depicted by the Spirit of God (2Cor 3:3). The Spirit works upon him in such a way that he is being transformed into God's image "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16). Thus he has to grow up in every way into the mature manhood, to the stature of Christ (Eph 4:13, 15). Every man has the obligation to put off his old nature of the corrupted flesh and be renewed in the spirit putting on the new nature created after the likeness of God (Eph 4:22-24). For this the prerequisite is a true humility to acknowledge his own real state of misery. It is when he humbles himself that he becomes strong in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 12:10).

Paul then points out Jesus Christ as the perfect man in whom man's image becomes true and glorious. For him, Christ

is the God-man; "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, . . . all things were created through him and for him" (Col 1:15-16). But at the same time, he is the true and perfect man. Though he is the Son of God, he was "born of a woman" (Gal 4:4). He, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross" (Phl 2:6-8).

In contrast to the first Adam, here we find the ideal Adam who is always associated with God, who is completely unselfish to the extent of emptying himself, and who is perfectly obedient to God to the point of sacrificing his own life. The motivation of this self-abasement was purely altruistic: "For our sake he (God the Father) made him sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). He is the humble, obedient and just man who took upon himself a vicarious suffering and death for the sake of the whole humanity.³⁷

According to Paul, therefore, the disfigured image of man can be regained only if he grows into the stature of Christ, who kept himself always related to God, and at the same time with a purely unselfish motive emptied himself to bring down salvation to his fellow-men.

The Johannine Idea of Man: In John, the image of man is drawn in contrast to that of Jesus, the Incarnate Word. Man's image attains its real meaning and value only as far as it is integrated to the image of that God-man.

Man is "from below", while Jesus is "from above" (Jn 8:23). Man is completely helpless if he is not raised from his low state by the God-man. Unless he is illumined and liberated by Jesus, he always remains in the world of darkness, sin and ignorance. Jesus came to this world as the light of the world to enlighten every man (Jn 1:9). Whoever follows him, will not walk

37. Cf. Is ch, 53.

in darkness but will have the light of life (Jn 8:12; 12:46). This light is the life of men and the loss of it means eternal death (Jn 8:12; 3:16-21; 1:4).

Man by his very nature is prone to evil and is very reluctant to come to the light (3:19-20; 1:10). When man is left to himself, he is incapable of having a perfect knowledge of God. For, no man could ever see God except the Incarnate Son of God who is of the bosom of the Father, and who descended from heaven (Jn 1:18; 3:13). Man has, therefore, an absolute necessity of coming near to Jesus the Light, the perfect revelation and revealer of God, in order to attain eternal life (Jn 8:24,51; 5:24; 3:16-21; 20:31). For, he is the only way to the Father, without whom man will go astray groping in the darkness (Jn 14:6; 12:35-6) Unless man is liberated by Christ the Son of God who remains always associated with the Father, he will remain as a slave of sin (Jn 8:34-36; 17:2).

It is only in Jesus the Word Incarnate that man's image becomes completed. Jesus is the perfect man. He liked to call himself by the term "Son of Man". In the OT this title has two significances. First, it indicated man's poverty, weakness, infidelity and sin in contrast to God's majesty and faithfulness.³⁸ God called Ezechiel by this title to show that there existed a great distance between Himself and his prophet.³⁹ Secondly, this title indicated in some way the figure of the future Messiah, who would come in glory in the clouds of heaven.⁴⁰ In Daniel 7:13-28, however, it was a symbolic figure for the ideal Israel of the future, which later came to be projected on the person of the coming Messiah.

Jesus, however, has used this title in both these ways when he spoke of himself. On the one hand he is the poor and humble man;⁴¹ but on the other, he is the Messiah coming in glory as Daniel foresaw him.⁴²

38. Cf. Num 23:19; Eccl 6:20; Ps 144:3-4; 8:4; Is. 15:29.

39. Ez 2:1; 4:1; 6:2; 7:2.

40. Dan 7:13-28

41. Cf. Mt 8:20; 11:19; 17:22; 20:28.

42. Cf. Mt 17:9; 24:30; 25:31; 26:64.

In John, this title "Son of Man" indicates Jesus the Meseiah as far as he is the inclusive representative of the redeemed humanity. He is the Vine and the believers are its branches.⁴³ He is the true Vine of God which has first undergone an oppression, and then was delivered by the power of God (Ps 80:9-18). If the symbolism of vine represented Israel of the OT, in the NT Jesus the true Vine represents the New Israel of the New Covenant. If the angels ascended and descended upon Jacob who represented the whole Israel of the OT (cf. Gen 28:12), they would do the same upon Jesus the Son of Man, who represents the new Israel, the redeemed humanity of the NT. (Jn 1:51). He is an inclusive member of the redeemed humanity. He, being the Word of God from all eternity, became flesh and pitched his tent in our midst (Jn 1:14). He offered his life to save us (Jn 3:14-15). Just as the suffering servant was exceedingly glorified in his vicarious death (Is 52:13; 53:7-8), so he was also glorified when he was lifted up on the cross (Jn 3:14; 12:34; 8:28). It is then that he would draw all men to himself (Jn 12:32); namely, by his vicarious suffering and death he would gather together all the scattered children of God (Jn 12:50-52). His specific character of being the "Son of Man" is revealed in this action of drawing all men to himself and uniting them with himself and making them also ascend to the Father.⁴⁴

John emphasizes not only that Jesus is the Son of Man, but also that he is the "Son of God". He is from the sphere of the "spirit", from the world of truth and light, in contrast to mere men who are "from below", of the "flesh", from the world of falsehood and darkness. His appearance in this world was a descent "from above", and it culminates in his ascent to the same place. If man has to pass on to the sphere "from above", he has to be incorporated by means of a rebirth (Jn 3:5) to the Incarnate Word who ascends again to that sphere above.

This elevation of man to the higher plane is proportionate to the extent of his incorporation into Christ, of which the union between Christ and his Father is the archetype. That union be-

43. Cf. Jn 15:1ff.

44. Cf. Jn 3:13-14; 6:62.

tween Christ and his Father is complete. Christ is never alone, but always he is with his Father (Jn 16:32). They are so united to each other that he could say: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30). He came to this world in the name of his Father as His delegate (5:43), so much so that he who receives him, is receiving the Father (13:20) and he who rejects him, is rejecting the Father (15:23). The Son always speaks the words of the Father and does His works, but always in perfect subordination to the Father to such an extent that he could say: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me" (4:34). Here the doing of the will of his Father is nothing but his work of salvation for mankind.

Man will be perfectly happy only when he will bear the image of Christ in his own person.⁴⁵ Then man's image becomes complete and great, since then it is transformed into the beautiful image of Jesus Christ, who has always kept in his person a perfect and permanent relatedness to God by way of obedience and love, and to his fellow-men by his self-sacrificing love and concern for them. It is by this perfect and simultaneous relation to God and man that one becomes a true man.

Dharmaram College
Bangalore-560029

Lucius Nereparampil

45. Cf. Apoc 22:4; 21:3-4, 22:22:5.

The Place of Man in Evolution

Darwin's theory of evolution marks a turning point in the intellectual history of mankind. It seems that no other scientific theory has reversed the prevailing beliefs regarding man and nature as this theory. In his book, *The Origin of Species*, Darwin demonstrated, with numerous examples, that the "theory of fixity of species" was untenable. After Darwin "the fateful idea that all things change, that they evolve, has become one of the cornerstones on which the thinking of civilized man is based."¹

Dewey demonstrated that the conceptions that had reigned in the philosophy of nature and knowledge for two thousand years rested on this assumption based on the superiority of the fixed and the final; they had treated change and origin as signs of defect and unreality.² "The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life".³ Thus a new reality of change over permanence became popular with his finding.

According to George H. Mead the title, *The Origin of Species*, indicates the origin of forms because species is nothing but the Latin word for form.⁴ Darwin showed how forms arose as a natural process by reversing the accepted beliefs for centuries that forms were originally given. To Plato forms were eternal and hence not subjected to the limitations of time and space; and to Aristotle evolution was the development of the form which is existing already. Such a belief in forms, well-established in the course of time, was already challenged during the 19th century

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1. Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 1
 2. John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1910), p. 1
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 8
 4. George H. Mead, *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 157

by Romanticists, especially romantic idealists like Hegel. Indeed, Mead calls romanticism the philosophy of evolution⁵ as it believes that the process of experience creates its own forms.⁶ Thus a background was made for the development of the theory of evolution. Kroeber, the outstanding anthropologist, also argues that the West was so ripe for evolution that it could scarcely have been avoided.⁷ In the words of Montagu, "Darwinian biology was largely influenced by the social and political thought of the first half of the sixteenth century."⁸ No wonder that the theory of evolution was developed simultaneously by both Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace though the latter was overshadowed by the former.

Darwin's theory of evolution which made its appearance "in the fullness of time" brought a revolution in the development of various sciences. In the words of Kroeber, "There was evidently a particular historic concatenation in the world's thought which enabled Darwin's discovery to trigger off consequences so great".⁹ He indicates that until 1859, all sciences were essentially static, and it was Darwin who triggered the sciences dealing with earth, life, and culture into becoming more dynamic.¹⁰

What is Evolution?

"Evolution is definable in general terms as one-way, irreversible process in time, which during its course generates novelty, diversity, and higher levels of organization. It operates in all sectors of the phenomenal universe but has been most fully described and analysed in the biological sector".¹¹ The term irreversible suggests that evolution does not move backward to

5. *Ibid.* p. 127. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 154

7. Theodore Brameld, *The Use of Explosive Ideas in Education: Culture, Class, and Evolution* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965), p. 183

8. Ashley Montagu, *Darwin: Competition and Cooperation* (New York: Abelandschman, 1952), p. 32

9. A. L. Kroeber, "Evolution, History and Culture" in Sol Tax, *Evolution After Darwin* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960), Vol. II., p. 1

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 212 11. *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 107

an earlier state. In the forward movement, without repetition, it produces "novelty" and variety. Evolution occurs in time so that the past constantly modifies the present and the present modifying the future course of nature. Evolution is also characterised by "increase of organization." It created an infinite range of new and different forms by having more and more integrated arrangements within and among these forms.¹²

Evolution is not limited to the sphere of living things, but embraces all reality. Huxley points out three sectors of reality or three phases of evolution, the inorganic or cosmological, the organic or biological, and the human or psycho-social. These three sectors differ radically in their extent, both in space and time, in the methods and mechanisms by which their self-transformations operate, in their rates of change, in the results which they produce and in the levels of organization which they attain.¹³ Darwin was preoccupied with the evolution at the organic level. But modern biologists, like Huxley, Simpson and Dobzhansky, are equally concerned with the evolution at the human phase when new trends are expressed, especially by the formation of culture. Indeed evolution of culture "has suspended and superseded biological evolution".¹⁴

The heart of Darwin's explanation of how evolution occurs was natural selection. Its meaning in the words of Darwin, is that "any being, if it vary, however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and some varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected".¹⁵ Dobzhansky explains natural selection as a blind, mechanical, automatic, impersonal process in the following way:

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12. Brameld, *Use of Explosive Ideas in Education*, *op. cit.*, p. 166
 13. Julian Huxley, *Evolution in Action* (New York: New American Library, 1953), p. 10
 14. Dobzhansky, *op. cit.*, p. 319
 15. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (ed.) Morse Peckham (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1959), p. 74

Any species is capable of increasing in number in a geometric progression: sooner or later the state will be reached when only a part of the progeny will be able to survive. The statistical probability of survival or elimination, despite accidents, will depend on the degree of the adaptedness of individuals and groups to the environment in which they live. This degree of adaptedness is in part conditioned by the genetic endowment. . . . Therefore, the incidence of better adapted forms will tend to increase and the incidence of the less well adapted ones to decrease.¹⁶

Therefore, the term "natural" in natural selection only means that the selective process does not arise from human choice.¹⁷

Darwin noticed how variations took place in all living beings and he formulated the theory that natural selection acted by the preservation and accumulation of variations which were beneficial.¹⁸ He was at a disadvantage in explaining the causes of variations because of the limited knowledge of genetics at that time. Today scientists realize that the cause is mutation or the modification of genes leading to differential reproduction.

While some scientists enriched the theory of evolution, others like Herbert Spencer, the English Social Philosopher, and William G. Sumner, the American sociologist, misinterpreted the theory. The social Darwinists, as they are called, claim that just as struggle is part of the processes of Nature, struggle within the society is also to be taken for granted. If we leave human beings to struggle for their existence without external interference the fittest would survive.¹⁹

16. Dobzhansky, *op. cit.*, p. 128 17. *Ibid.*, p. 129

18. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species and the Descent of Man* (New York: The Modern Library, 1859), p. 93

19. Mathew Zachariah, "The Impact of Darwin's Theory of Evolution on Theories of Society", in *Social Studies*, Vol. LXII, No. 2, Feb. 1971. 70-71.

Economic competition, according to social Darwinists, is not only justifiable but also desirable because it is in tune with the laws of nature. Summer points out that "if we do not like the survival of the fittest, we have only one possible alternative, and that is the survival of the unfittest. The former is the law of civilization; the latter is the law of anti-civilization."²⁰ By his theory that the millionaires are the products of natural selection, Summer justifies the existing social order. Some people manage to survive in the struggle for existence and they occupy the leading positions in our society. "The growth of a large business is merely a survival of the fittest..... It is merely the working-out of a law of nature and a law of God".²¹ Social Darwinists "equated affluence and occupation of the seats of the mighty with biological fitness, and economic laissez-faire, cut-throat competition, and rivalry with natural selection".²²

Indeed Darwin used the term "struggle for existence" in a metaphorical sense.²³ This struggle is not necessarily contention, warfare, or bloodshed. Animals and plants "struggle" to avoid perils of cold, heat, drowning, gale winds etc..., but they do not necessarily harm or kill others during their struggle.²⁴

Is Man an Animal?

Probably the outstanding finding of evolution on the question of man is the realization that he is an animal. But the animal that evolutionists are considering is neither a beast, implying a low and sinful nature, nor a deity with all the glorification attributed to it. Rather they see man as part of nature and its continuation with other animals.

Dobzhansky shows that in his greatest work, *The Origin of Species*, Darwin refrains from discussing man except by implication. However, the storm of protest which blew off his book

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20. Summer quoted in Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955). p. 57.
 21. Dobzhansky, *op. cit.*, p. 12
 22. *Ibid*, p. 11.
 23. Darwin, *The Origin of Species and the Descent of Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 52
 24. Dobzhansky, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

is enough evidence to prove that the implication was well perceived. "The book contains the most revolutionary scientific idea of all times concerning the nature of man: man has evolved and is evolving".²⁵ In the other well-known book, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin took the inevitable step and showed that man was a part of nature and kin to all life.²⁶

Man is related to nature and to all living beings. Man's relationship to other organisms leads to, what Huxley calls, "the nothing-but fallacy".²⁷ It is said that because man is an animal he is nothing but an animal. Huxley mentions the analogy of water to prove the inadequacy of this "nothing-but school". When we boil water there is a continuity of substance between water as a liquid and water as steam; but there is a critical point at which the substance H_2O changes its properties.²⁸ While we agree that man is an animal along with evolutionists, we oppose the statement that man is nothing but an animal. In the latter belief we deny that man has essential attributes other than those of animals. Man is an entirely new kind of animal and his unique nature lies in those characteristics that are not shared by any other animal. Hence we give a place to both continuity and difference; as one of the animals, man keeps his continuity and as a unique human being he differs from others. Hence Lewis indicates that the essence of evolution is not simply continuity but difference, the fact that the later stages of evolution show a genuine advance.²⁹

A Human Being Is Unique

The question of man's uniqueness is interpreted differently by various scientists even though they all agree in pointing out some unique or special features for the human being, like the ability to reason and to make tools. Some of them admit man's uniqueness only to the extent of the uniqueness of an ape or

25. *Ibid.*, p. xi.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 5

27. Huxley, *Evolution in Action*, *op. cit.*, p. 115

28. *Ibid.*

29. John Lewis, *Man and Evolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1962), p. 7

any other species, each of which has its own special characteristics. But others believe that man's uniqueness is different in a higher and nobler way with features found nowhere else in nature. Darwin belongs to the first group. In *The Descent of Man* Darwin argued that man was not a unique animal, and that his mind differed from those of other animals merely in degree and not in kind.³⁰ In the book, *The Imperial Animal*, the authors argue that man is a unique primate with a unique primate nature and the difference with other animals is one of degree and not of kind. "The uniqueness of man's body does not represent a difference in kind between him and his primate cousins".³¹ This assumption that man's difference is only in degree leads the authors to believe that human social behaviour can be explained fully by studying the group behaviour of animals, mostly primates.

To Huxley, the course of human evolution is unique "not in the trivial sense of being a different course from that of any other organism, but in the profounder sense of being the only path that could have achieved the essential characters of man".³² He believes that the critical point in the evolution of man was reached when he acquired the use of verbal concepts and could organize his experience in a common pool. Here we begin to grasp the nature and profundity of the difference in the case of human beings.³³ Conceptual thought has evolved only in man. After studying the evolutionary trends Huxley concludes that this conceptual thought could not have evolved in any animal other than man.

Simpson believes that man is fundamentally a new sort of animal and with him a new sort of evolution begins. Man, the highest animal, represents an unusual or unique degree of progress in evolution. The most important features of *homo sapiens*

30. Sol Tax, *Evolution After Darwin*, op. cit., Vol. III., p. 215.

31. Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal*, (N. Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 9

32. Huxley, *Man in the Modern World*, op. cit., p. 17

33. Huxley, *Evolution in Action*, op. cit., p. 115

are the interrelated factors of intelligence, flexibility, individualization and socialization. These four features, though occurring widely in the animal kingdom as progressive developments, are carried to a degree incomparably greater in man than in any other animal. Also man is the most adaptable of animals and he is the only animal that really exerts any significant degree of control over the environment.³⁴ Dobzhansky too agrees with these assumptions and shows that the course of evolution is being controlled by man. Man really occupies the spiritual centre of the universe.³⁵

We share with these modern evolutionists who go beyond Darwin in formulating the nature of human being, and perceive man, though one of the animals, as a unique being. We have noticed certain features or characteristics which are not simply higher in the human being but distinct and different. Among them the conceptual thought occupies the central place. Man knows along with other animals, many of which can know to a substantial degree, but he alone knows that he knows and can act accordingly. He alone can obtain knowledge at a conceptual level and pass it on to the succeeding generations. In these distinct qualities of the human being evolution reaches its culmination.

Man, the Spearhead of Evolution

Man's uniqueness can be further explored by looking at him as the axis or spearhead of evolution. This notion was pioneered by Teilhard de Chardin who believes that the evolution taking place for millions of years in the sphere of earth and living being has been leading to the rise of man. Though evolution reaches a new level in man with his power for reflection it has not achieved the final point.³⁶

In his well-known book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Chardin has chosen man as the centre and around it he has tried "to

34. Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-286

35. Dobzhansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-7.

36. Neville Braybrooke, *Teilhard de Chardin: Pilgrim of the Future* (N. Y: The Seabury Press, 1964), p. 10.

establish a coherent order between antecedents and consequences.”³⁷ The universe, Chardin explains, can best be explained by the law of consciousness and complexity. It is widely recognized that earth and living beings assume greater levels of complexity during evolution. Chardin introduces the difficult concept of increasing consciousness as the key to his interpretation of evolution. Everything in the universe has a “without” or exterior and a “within” or “consciousness”. In man, who stands at the summit of evolution, the evidence of consciousness is immediately obvious. However, if we move down in the evolutionary scale and reach the inorganic level of reality it is difficult to establish the existence of this “within”.³⁸ In general, scientists oppose the notion of “consciousness” in matter. “In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least upto now, except the without of things”.³⁹

Chardin distinguishes several stages in the evolutionary process; they are: geosphere, biosphere, psycosphere, noosphere and point Omega. Evolution of the earth (geosphere) and of the living beings (biosphere) continued for millions of years leading to the crowning in the thought process (psychosphere) and finally in higher thought (noosphere). The appearance of the “thinking layer”, as Chardin conceives, marks the beginning of “a new age”. “The earth gets a new skin. Better still, it finds the soul”.⁴⁰ This thinking layer has spread over and above the world of plants and animals. Evolution has moved to a higher plane, man acting as its spearhead. A distinctive type of consciousness, what is called reflection, has emerged and by it man has achieved his superiority.⁴¹ Reflection is “the power acquired by a consciousness, to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own particular consistence and value:

37. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (Harper Torch Books, 1959), p. 29.

38. Joseph Kopp, *Teilhard de Chardin: A New Synthesis of Evolution* (Deus Books, 1964), p. 29

39. Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 182

41. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Appearance of Man* (N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 224.

no longer merely to know, but to know oneself; no longer merely to know but to know that one knows.⁴²

Man by becoming conscious of himself will be transformed. Chardin anticipates a superlife which culminates in a future point called Omega. This future point is reached by steady upward progression or "hominization" by which "man will become still more intensely man".⁴³

Man the Evolution-shaping Animal

Evolution continued for millions of years reaching a culmination in man who possesses many unique qualities. These qualities enabled the human being to take control over the course of evolution which happened by blind forces for a long period of time. Hence our study of evolution helps us to see the human being as the animal who can shape or direct the course of evolution.

The role of man in the evolutionary process is conceived differently by various scientists. To some evolution continues in all living beings including man in about the same way as it happened in the past, and to others evolution has taken a different course with the appearance of man whose control over the process makes the difference. "In the world of Darwin man has no special status other than his definition as a distinct species of animal".⁴⁴ But modern evolutionists, like Huxley and Simpson, differ from Darwin on this question by assigning a special status for the human being. In the words of Huxley, man finds himself in "the unexpected position of business manager for the cosmic process of evolution; the former is not simply a new phase of evolution, but rather a new kind."⁴⁵ Margaret Mead says that Huxley has stressed the 'discontinuity' between man as a culture-building animal and all other living creatures. Interested in

42. Chardin, *Phenomenon of Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 165

43. Kopp, *Chardin: A New Synthesis of Evolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

44. Simpson, *This View of Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

45. Huxley, *Evolution in Action*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

46. Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

'continuity' she sees cultural evolution as part of biological evolution.⁴⁷

The above scholars make earnest efforts to compare and contrast cultural evolution with organic evolution. Man as an animal has many things to share at the organic level and at the same time he differs by having a different level of evolution.

Evolution at the human level occupies a key position and it begins to direct the course of evolution on the whole. We can know more about the future of evolution by looking into the great possibilities of man as a culture-building animal because it is this culture-building quality of man that gives direction to the course of evolution.

Among animals man alone has culture which is defined as the organized way of life of a group of people. Any group, whether primitive or advanced, has its own culture. Culture is entirely learned; man can "inherit" the accumulated knowledge and skills of the past. Organic evolution rejects the inheritance of acquired characters. But in the new level of evolution related to human being, he can inherit the acquired characters, namely the culture, which is accumulated for generations. This inheritance is not biological, but only social. The present generation is especially lucky because of the addition of a vast amount of knowledge as part of the cultural heritage. While the inheritance at the organic level is limited we find great scope and potential for the inheritance of culture, especially for the modern man. Organic evolution is directed by mutations apart from the control of the particular human being undergoing that process; but cultural evolution is directed by man and new factors arising as elements in consciousness. It is indeed interesting to note the direction of this new course of evolution.

Future Course of Evolution

"The world is only interesting when one looks forward", was a favourite saying of Teilhard de Chardin. What is man's

47. Margaret Mead, *Continuities of Cultural Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 33.

future? Where is he going? Is evolution moving in any particular direction? The answers given by evolutionists on such questions related to future are different. Many of them deny any particular purpose for evolution while others like Chardin, believe in a final goal. Those who deny such a goal try to explain everything based upon chance.

Chardin tells us that even from the beginning (related to the inorganic matter) the goal of evolution has been to increase "conscious". The achievement of thought, though the highest stage so far, is not the final one because of the growth of "conscious". The evolutionary goal, which is already determined, is Point Omega.⁴⁸ At Omega, consciousness has greatly increased its depth and distinctiveness. "It is a hyper-personal state of supreme consciousness in which personality is the chief ingredient and maintains its integrity by its center of consciousness while uniting with all other forms of superconsciousness".⁴⁹ To Chardin the uniting force is love and the uniting process is extended to all persons. In short, Point Omega is inevitable and we are already moving toward it.

Aurobindo, the great Indian philosopher and *yogi*, anticipates the emergence of supermanhood characterized by a supermind as the next step in evolution. To him evolution is the process by which consciousness liberates itself. Consciousness is already released with the formation of life and then the mind is the next step in the development of a supermind.⁵⁰ Man is a transitional being and since mind is not the highest power of consciousness he is moving on to the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step, the supermind. Supermanhood is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not superior degree of knowledge, power, character, genius, love, purity or perfection. "Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits; it is a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature"⁵¹

48. Kopp, *Chardin: A New Synthesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 52,

49. Rich, *Humanistic Foundations*, *op. cit.*, p. 41,

50. Robert Mcdermott, *The Essential Aurobindo* (Schochen Books, 1973) p. 29.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Does Evolution Bring Progress?

If evolution brings us to a goal which is considered as desirable or beneficial we can take it as progress. On the other hand if the goal reached is harmful or destructive to the living being it should be considered as regressive. Then, looking at the evolution that has taken place so far, we can definitely say that there is progress. The evolution from lower animals like protozoa to mammals, especially man, is indeed a progress. However, every thing that took place so far may not be considered as progress because of the variations that were destructive and harmful. Hence we shall say that "evolution produces progress without being progressive as a whole".⁵²

Will there be progress for evolution in the future? If it leads to the Omega Point or supermanhood with its supermind definitely there is progress. Both Aurobindo and Chardin believe in the possibility of a greater consciousness to be realized in the future. Geneticists claim that a better breed of human beings can be produced by controlling the genes. While anticipating these better conditions we should not ignore the possibility of something worse that can happen in the future. Any goal which is inevitable may stand in the way of man's choices and freedom. Instead of seeking goals in evolutions others try to explain the phenomenon in terms of chance occurrences. Such explanation based on chance also sounds simplistic. Evolution so far has moved along certain lines leading to a culmination in man. If man cooperates evolution will move even to higher stages. The opposite too is a possibility since man can destroy himself bringing a different course of evolution. We are moving on to somewhere or to some state and it is upto man to cooperate in giving direction and thus making it a forward movement.

There is plan and purpose for evolution which is determined by man. Man purposes and he makes plans. He controls evolution based upon his own values and needs. However, it is to be admitted that human being does not have full control over his future, individually or collectively. It may sound paradoxical to say on the one hand that man controls evolution

52. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

and on the other that everything is not within his control. As noted before, life can be best explained by admitting its paradoxes. Hence we conclude that the future course of evolution can be upward or downward depending upon man and it is upto his responsibility to make it progressive. Indeed evolution itself gives guidelines to achieve progress.

The indispensable principles of evolution, as pointed out by Simpson, are the following: (1) Man is the comparatively recent product of a natural process that is billions of years old. (2) All living things are related. (3) The principal mechanisms of evolutionary change are now largely understood and can be formulated as scientific laws. (4) Man's special abilities, such as symbolization, are the product of biological adaptation and hence of natural selection. (5) Mankind is a *kind*, a single species, with its internal resemblances far outweighing its differences.⁵³

According to Simpson the first grand lesson learned from evolution is that of the unity of life. One of the great ethical achievements of early Christianity and other religions was the recognition of a great principle, the brotherhood of man. Now evolution establishes this belief as a scientific fact. Man is part of nature and he is one of the animals. Yet he is distinguished as a unique being, forming a separate race. Each human being is related to everyone else irrespective of place and time, thus forming a family of man. Mankind is just one group comprising all human beings, living or dead. With the appearance of man a new evolution has started and it is upto him to give direction to this phase. The best guiding factor in directing the evolution is to learn the great lesson of evolution itself, namely the brotherhood of man. When man realizes that he belongs to one family he can direct the course of evolution for progress.

T. M. Thomas.

53. Simpson quoted in Theodore Brameld, *op. cit.*, p. 203

The Dynamic Image of the Vedic Man

The picture of man presented in the Vedas as the sharer of God's creative power and as the point of cosmic unity is a tremendously dynamic one. The vedic man, charged with the mission of continuing the process of creation, is at once the symbol and sustainer of the cosmic harmony which in turn provides him with a pattern of the order he should realize in his own personal life. Full of optimism about the success of his mission of keeping up the cosmic as well as the moral harmony, he, on the one hand, assimilates into himself the whole universe through *tapas*, which transforms him into a point of dynamism; and, on the other hand, he gathers men and gods, creatures and the creator, together at the table of *yajña* through which he makes himself available to all beings. The same *tapas* makes him a transparent personality in the sense that through him the divine makes its own presence felt in the world, and that thus he becomes the medium of God's revelation in the world. With the dynamic faculty of intuition called *dhīh* he shares the view point of gods and looks at everything in the light of heaven. In his supra-normal contemplative consciousness (*prajña*) he communes with the eternal *Vāk*, which he consequently expresses in linguistic symbols which are in fact the vibration of his own personality enraptured by the divine splendour.

We now propose to discuss in the following pages the above-said dynamic image of the vedic man. We shall, however, confine ourselves to the analysis of certain key concepts, namely, *yajña*, *tapas* and *dhīh*, a correct understanding of which will amply testify to the creativity of the vedic man. We might even venture to state that these three terms do clearly summarize the vedic spirituality.

1. Yajna: the Source of Life and Activity

It is at the sacrificial altar that we meet the vedic man at his best. For him the altar is the ultimate limit of the earth,

and the sacrifice is the centre (*nābhiḥ*) of the universe.¹ Gathering around the altar the vedic people formed themselves into a sacrificial community, and therefore, faith in the sacrificial efficacy was for them the basic mark of orthodoxy. As Antonio T. de Nicolas has noticed,² whatever was noble and glorious, and whatever could produce nobility and glory, was associated with sacrifice, while the non-sacrificers were condemned as inhuman, godless and infidel who deserved nothing but death.³ The latter are unrighteous and 'coverers of truth' (*Sātya-dhṛit*). According to A. T. de Nicolas sacrifice is a mental attitude that is behind the higher mode of action the *ṛṣis* have. This attitude again is a vision which many do not share on account of the weakness of their minds and undertaking. "Those sharing in the sacrificial vision were the followers of the paths of gods, those who did not were the 'coverers of truth' (*satyadhṛit*). Those above shared in view, those below did not, and were enveloped by darkness.... Only the sacrificial vision was capable of producing the way of acting which was cosmically efficient."⁴ Therefore, what sacrifice demands of an individual is a real change of viewpoint from the common-place way of looking at things, and not merely a change of practice.

Besides being the centre of life and activity *yajña* is conceived also as the source of existence. Very often we come across descriptions of God's act of creation as the sacrificial dismemberment of divine *puruṣa*. This Puruṣa, later identified with Prajapati, the creator-god, has become the very arche-type of the vedic man, who takes upon himself the task of maintaining the cosmic harmony as well as the moral order, both of which are indicated by the term *ṛta*. Man thinks that he has received the commission of perpetuating the creative sacrifice of Prajapati, and that thereby he is given a share in the very creative work of God. Thus for example, we read in the *Bagavad-Gīta*:

"In ancient days Prajapati created men together with *Yajña*, and said to them, 'By this (*yajña*) shall ye

1. *Rgvēda*, 1. 164. 35.

2. Antonio T. de Nicolas, *Four Dimensional Man*, Dharmaram College, Bangalore, 1971, p. 68.

3. *Rgvēda*, 10.27.1. 4. A.T. de Nicolas, op.cit., p. 68.

prolong your lineage, let this be to you the cow that yields the milk of all that ye desire. With this shall ye sustain the gods so that the gods may sustain you (in return). Sustaining one another (thus) ye shall achieve the highest good. For, (so) sustained by sacrifice the gods will give you the food of your desire. Whoso enjoys their gift yet gives them nothing (in return) is a thief, no more nor less.'

Good men who eat the leavings of the sacrifice are freed from every taint, but evil are they and evil do they eat who cook (only) for their own sakes.⁵

In Brahmanic theology sacrifice is meant to re-integrate the body of Prajāpati immolated at the sacrificial act of creation, and thus to secure the wholeness of world and man. It was in fact the gods that for the first time re-integrated the body of Prajāpati immolated and thus exhausted at creation, and that they did by performing a sacrifice instituted by Prajāpati himself after the manner of his own creation-sacrifice. Creation, conceived as a sacrificial self-giving of Prajāpati, resulted in the world of multiplicity, while the sacrificial ritual undertaken by the gods restored the unity and totality of the same multiplicity. By his act of creation Purusha, the creator-god, in a way lost his identity and transcendence, whereas gods' sacrifice, which was a counter-creation, redeemed him and restored him to unity and totality: "The Lord of the universe (Prajāpati) gave himself in sacrifice to them (gods). He also made himself a victim for them; after having immolated himself for them, he instituted a sacrifice in the manner of his own sacrifice and thus redeemed himself from them".⁶ Sacrifice on the part of gods was, therefore, an act of re-integrating all that were divided and dispersed and of gathering together all those un-coordinated phenomena into an organic unity. So doing they not only re-integrated and consolidated the single form of Prajāpati, but they restored even the unity of the cosmos, because Prajāpati is the single or the unified form of the counter-part of the totality.⁷

5. *Bagavatgīta*. 3. 10-13. 6. *Satapathabrāhmaṇa*.

7. Cf. Dr Thomas Thyparambil, *The Theme of "Creation" in the Early Hindu Scriptures*, (unpublished), p. 95.

Now man thinks it to be his duty to periodically repeat the sacrificial gesture of the gods to consolidate the single form of Prajapati, so that the latter may continue the act of creation. This deep conviction of the vedic man has been symbolically expressed by the elaborate ceremony called *Agni-cayana* described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.⁸ This consists mainly of the building up of a fire-altar, the structure and constituents of which dramatically represent the meaning and purpose of the Hindu sacrifice itself. Constructing the altar in five layers symbolizing the five powers of Prajapati relaxed and exhausted at creation, the sacrificer repeats the deeds of gods who re-activated the creative force of Prājapati. By this the vedic sages, transcending their own temporality, on the one hand, recreates the "Great Time" of creation, and, on the other, enables the "otherwise exhausted and relaxed god" to regain the creative power and pleasing form that he originally had.

The construction of the altar in five layers represents also the very universe with its five regions, and this is symbolic of the very restoration of the cosmic order and unity. If we keep in mind that for the vedic mind, the sacrifice is the *nābhih* of the world, it is easy to understand how the building up of the altar can symbolize the implanting of the *axis mundi*.⁹

Thus the vedic man experiences his deep involvement in the creative act of God himself, and is confident that he can perpetuate the creative sacrifice of God, and that thus he can keep up the integrity and unity of the cosmos and of himself. At the sacrificial altar he enters into a lively communion with the whole universe, with gods and men, with the material as well as spiritual levels of existence. The vedic man is not an isolated atom caught up in the spacio-temporal limits of his bodily existence. Not only other men but even gods are his friends and allies. He believes in his personal relationship (*bandhutā*) with the gods, with whose assistance he is confident to rise above the vicissitudes of life. The sacrificial altar is the point where man and gods join together to work for the well-being and harmony

8. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 10:1.5.1.

9. Cf. Dr Thomas Thyparambil, op. cit., pp. 95-99.

of the universe. There men very generously entertains the gods who in turn provides him with the bounty of well-regulated nature. "His (vedic man's) religion is not something outwardly but rather the scaralisation of the precise net-work of all his links with beings of the three worlds."¹⁰ Man regards himself as a microcosm having the same powers and functions that are at work in the macrocosm, and the communion between the microcosm and macrocosm is a basic presupposition of the vedic spirituality. This communion is realized at the altar of sacrifice, which is the living symbol of unity and totality. The sense of community derived by the vedic mind from the altar is beautifully expressed in the concluding hymn of *Rg-vēda*,¹² addressed by the priest to the people gathered around the altar:

"Walk together, speak together
Let your minds be of one accord,
As the *dēvas* of old, being of one mind,
Accepted their share of sacrifice.

May your hymn be common, your dwelling common,
Common the mind, and the thoughts of these united
A common hymn do I chant with you,
And worship with your common oblation.

Your call is the same,
Let your hearts be of one accord,
And all of you be of one mind,
As you live well together."

2. Tapas: the Creative Principle

Yajña, the source of life and activity, derives its infallible efficacy from a still more basic principle, namely, *tapas*. We have already noticed how *yajña* in its final analysis is a higher mode of looking at the world in contradistinction to the common place view-point. Thus *yajña* is essentially a transcendence leading to the authentic involvement of oneself in the inner life of the universe at large. This an ordinary man is unable to do. His encounter with the world is very likely to result in the loss

10. Dr R.V. De Smet, S.J., *The Indian Understanding of Man*, Poona (1970), p. 4. 11. *Rgvēda*, 10. 191. 2-4.

of his own personal identity. Instead of restoring the unity and totality of the universe, man, through the indiscriminating indulgence of the senses in the attractions of the world, might get disintegrated and dissipated into the world. A genuine sacrificer, on the contrary, controlling his mind and senses, thoughts and desires, gathers into himself all his energies and powers which would have otherwise dispersed without any positive effect. Then he enters into himself to meet the *Ātman*, the ultimate ground of his own existence, residing in his own inner self. Such an encounter with the absolute within himself will enable one to have a total vision of the universe that is required of a sacrificer. *Tapas* is this process of self-interiorizing with a view to the experience of the Absolute, and the resultant higher mode of vision. It is both a process and a force. As a process it is not a negative movement, nor is it a denial of human values. On the contrary, as the verbal root *tap* indicates, it is a vitalizing process whereby one heats up oneself so as to become a point of divine energy. It is this divine energy that makes a *yogi* the centre of creative vision and activity. Being a conscious bearer of the divine energy, a *yogi* is able to impart effective blessings as well as curses at his will.

That *tapas* is conceived as a principle of creation, has been amply substantiated by the many references to it in the vedic literature. Many of the creation myths are introduced by mentioning the *tapas* that the creator-god performed in preparation for the act of creation.¹²

Dr Thyparampil¹³ analysing the vedic concept of *tapas* as creative principle has observed the various stages of its development: Being a neuter noun ending in "s" *tapas* stands for an impersonal principle, and like other neuter names ending in "s" it implies an abstract action of the verb from which it is derived. Next, the abstract idea of *tapas* is raised to the rank of an entity which consequently takes the position of a power-principle which is productive by nature. Of this creative principle the

12. Cf. *Satapatha Brahmana*, 11: 5.8.1; Brh. Up. 1: 2, 6. etc.

13. Op. cit., pp, 159 ff. (159-169)

ṛiṣis are born,¹⁴ the cows are produced,¹⁵ the sacrifice is made efficient,¹⁶ and the daughters of faith are given birth.¹⁷ As a next step, *tapas* is considered as a cosmic power indispensable in the cosmogonic narrations of the *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas*. As a cosmic power, again *tapas* is taken as the first step towards the creation of the universe and is described sometimes as an objective force working by itself, and sometimes as being associated with some personal agent. In the *Nāsatīya sakta* "THAT ONE" has been described as having its origin from *tapas*.¹⁸ Similarly in RV. x. 190. *tapas* has been described as the productive principle of the cosmic Law (*ṛta*) and Truth (*satya*). In the myth of Prajāpati, however, *tapas* is just a means of creation at the hands of that creator-god. Here and in several other contexts *tapas* does not appear by itself; nor does it work spontaneously without being associated with a personal agent. Thus, perhaps impressed by the creative and enlivening function of heat in the physical world, the vedic seer finds it convenient to think of *tapas*, the devotional fervour resulting from ascetic practices,¹⁹ as creative power, so potent in itself as to produce extra-ordinary and supra-human effects. Gods having this power as belonging to their inner nature are described to be producing extra-ordinary effects. Man, on the contrary, does not have it as a power connatural to his being, but he can acquire it by interiorizing his powers, and then can make use of it for creative purposes. Having gathered the energy and the power of *tapas* he can do extra-ordinary acts and produce supra-human results like gods. For *tapas* as the inner heat or flame gives man the power and ability to feel that he is above the ordinary circumstances and, therefore, can produce extra-ordinary effects.²⁰

Thus endowed with the creative power of *tapas*, the vedic man finds himself fully equipped to fulfil the duty of maintaining the cosmic harmony. Using the power of *tapas* he would impart

14. *Rgvēda*, 10. 154. 4 15. *Rgvēda*, 10. 169. 2.

16. *Atharva Vēda*, 4. 34. 1. 17. *Atharva Vēda*, 6. 133. 4.

18. *Rgvēda*, 10. 129.

19. Cf. *Rgvēda*. 4.2.6; *Atharva Vēda*, 2.12.3.

20. Cf. Thomas Thyparambil, op. cit. p. 166.

merciless curses on anything that comes in his way,²¹ and generous blessings on whatever would promote his mission. With the flaming fire of *tapas* he would burn the demons, and would smite down the wicked right and left.²² Unassailable by the virtue of his *tapas* he soars up in the sky.²³ By the same power he knows the cosmic mysteries, and breaking through the human limitations enters into communion with divinities and invisible powers, and shares the world of heaven.²⁴ He believes that being elevated by the power of *tapas*, he can win over his enemies of all sorts, and that he can attain eternal life and wisdom.²⁵

3. Dhīh: Faculty of Intuitive Vision

Another distinguishing mark of the dynamic personality of the vedic man is his supra-normal contemplative consciousness denoted by the Sanskrit term *dhīh*. It is the faculty of intuitive vision for which the vedic poet is known. Through the agency of *dhīh* he shares the view-points of gods and sees by the light of heaven (*svardrash*). That the *Nighantu* explains *dhīh* both as *karma* and *prajña*, is extremely significant in the understanding of the vedic mind. As Srimat Aniravan has observed,²⁶ *dhīh* is the complex reality of *dravya-yajña* and *jñāna-yajña* which will lead the sage to the inner-soul-experience of illumined consciousness. Srimat Aniravan continues to say that this state of illumination is what the *Ṛṣis* call *sva*, the region of light, which the popular mind translated into the image of heaven. The popular concept of *sva* as heaven is an extension or sublimation of sense experience, and as such has been later combated by the concept of *mokṣa*. But for the vedic sages *sva* meant an actual inner-illumination to be realized through the intuitive faculty of *dhīh* here on earth itself, and was not fundamentally different from *Mokṣa*, though it did not distinctly suggest the philosophical postulates connoted by the latter term. In short, with the help of *dhīh* the sages experienced the Self in his own self.

21. *Rgveda*, 10: 182. 3; 1.36. 16; Atharva Veda 12.3.43.

22. *Rgveda*, 1.36.16. 23. *Rgveda*, 10.154.2.

24. *Rgveda*, 10.4.4. 25. *Rgveda*, 10.154.2.

26. Cf. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I., p. 314.

The vedic man knew that the doors of human minds could be opened to the super-natural realities and visions.²⁷ An etymological analysis of the various appellations of the vedic sages such as *Ṛṣi*, *Kavi* and *Vipra* might reveal the importance attributed to the power of *dhīh*. Authors are not agreed on the etymology of the term *ṛṣi*. According to *Yāska*, the famous vedic etymologist, it has as its root *ṛṣ* meaning to see.²⁸ Linguistics, however, traces it back to the Indo-European stem *ers-*, *eras-*, meaning to flow, and therefore the word in question would literally mean “enraptured”. Likewise L. Renou, the great linguistic authority on vedic literature, has derived the word *kavi* from the Indo-European base *Qeu*, meaning to see, to observe, to hear, to feel etc. This derivation justifies and illustrates the classical definition of *kavi* as *krānta-darṣi*, one who sees things that are beyond the visual power of the common man. *Kavi* is a man who searching in his own heart gets at the mystery of being and non-being.²⁹ On a similar analysis carried out with the term *vipra*, another title for the vedic poet, from the root *Vip* – to tremble, to shake, to be stirred up – it has been pointed out that the vedic poet really experienced the vibrations of religious and aesthetic inspiration³⁰ A. T. de Nicolas has further observed the significance of the term *manīṣa* in the understanding of the vedic mind. The term *manīṣa*, he says, “is applied both to poets and seers, meaning that among other intuitive visions poets and seers had the power to discover metaphysical secrets; seeking in their hearts the sages found the inherence of being and non-being (*sat* and *asat*) by their specific inspired thoughts (RV 10, 129,4). In this sense *manīṣa* and *vāk* have much in common. Their contents are not perceived by sense organs, for it is the essence of thing in itself”³¹ Thus, to sum up, the ideal of the vedic man is the *Ṛṣi* who enters into personal communion with divinity, here on earth itself,³² the *kavi* to whom *Vāk* unveils herself³³, the *vipra* who is stirred up by the inspiring vibrations of *Vāk*, and finally the *manīṣi* who discovers the mystery of being realized in himself.

27. *Rgveda*, 9.10.6. 28. *Nirukta*, 2.11. 29. *Rgveda*, 10.129.4.

30. A.T. de Nicolas, *The language of Vedas*, Indian Ecclesiastical Studies, Vol. 7, Nos. 3-4 p. 182.

31. *Ibid*, p. 183. 32. *Rgveda*, 5.52.13. 33. *Rgveda*, 10.17.4.

The greatest achievement of the intuitive vision of the vedic man is the vedas themselves. We might recall at this juncture the description of ṛṣi as *mantra-draṣṭā*, one who has *seen* the vedic hymns. It suggests that the *vēdas* contain mysteries that their authors intuitively saw in their supra-normal contemplative consciousness. That the concept of *Brahma*, often interpreted as stressing the transcendence of Reality was originally understood as the principle of poetic creation³⁴ at the disposal of the sages, points to the depth of vedic inspiration. The word *brahma* should be traced back to the Greek *mor-phe* (= to form, gestalt), and to the Indo-European base *morgwha*. The original form of *Brahma*, therefore, should have been *mregwh-men* meaning formation or formulation, primarily referring to poetic creations. This sense of the term *brahma*, certainly agrees with the vedic expressions like 'to sing a brahma',³⁵ 'my brahma',³⁶ 'to recite brahmas',³⁷ 'to hear brahmas',³⁸ 'to create a brahma',³⁹ 'to carpent or fabricate a brahma',⁴⁰ etc. In *Ṛgvēda*, therefore, *Brahma* is not the impersonal absolute as in *advaita* philosophy, nor is it simply a sacred formula, but the original creation of the vedic poet who is, as L. Renou notes, endowed with the inspiring power of intuition (*dhīh*). Here we may recall to our mind the function of *darśana* (vision) which has been always considered to be the activity of a genuine sage. Consequently any original work either theological or philosophical, is regarded as *darśana*. But the *vision* technically called *darśana*, should not be mistaken for an empirical activity. The Hindu scriptures are very emphatic about the inadequacy of human senses, including the intellect, to comprehend the Absolute. For example *Kēna Upaniṣad* says 'There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind, we know not, we understand not how one can teach this.'⁴¹ Vedic sages are

34. Cf. K Luke, *Some aspects of Rgvedic concept of Vak*, Jeevadhara, Vol. I. Nos. 2. pp. 218-236.

35. "Devadattam Brahma gāyata" Rv. 1. 37.4

36. "Mama Brahma" Rv. 2.18.7

37. "Brahmaṇi rcyante" Rv. 7.70.6

38. "Brahmāṇy-eṣam śrutam" Rv. 6.11.

39. "Akāri Brahma" Rv. 4.6.11.

40. "Navam atakṣat Brahma" Rv. 1.62.13.

41. *Kena Upaniṣad*, 1.5.

on the contrary taking recourse to their divine eyes – *divyam cakṣh*, as Gita puts it. Just before granting the vision of his *viśva rūpa* Lord Kṛṣṇa provides Arjuna with *divyan cakṣh*⁴² without which the latter would have been unable to have the vision. The vedic sages are, again, the *dhīras*, the enlightened and contemplative, who through the agency of his creative mind gets at the reality of *vāk*⁴³ which they experience as an ecstasy of delight ruling over light-powers.⁴⁴ Perhaps nobody but the *ṛṣis* has experienced or comprehended the full and bare personality of *Vāk*.⁴⁵ She rarely reveals herself to the chosen sages as a beautifully dressed and yearning wife to her beloved.⁴⁶

Conclusion

We have been pursuing the personality of the vedic sages placed before the people of India down the centuries as the ideal of religious endeavours. By a modest analysis of the three terms, *yajña*, *dhīh* and *tapas*, which stand for the key-principles of vedic spirituality, we get a glimpse of the same ideal. The vedic man is full of enthusiasm and optimism, on the one hand, and, on the other, creatively involved in the life and working of the universe. There is no department of life that has not been influenced and transformed by the higher mode of vision the *ṛṣis* had. Searching in their own hearts with the light of *dhīh* they discovered the link between being and non-being; then by *tapas*, through which they projected the interior depth of their existence, they brought the spirit of God down to the earth; and finally by means of the sacrificial vision-*yajña*-they recreated and re-established the original unity and harmony of universe expressed by the term *ṛta*.

University of Poona
Poona.

Thomas Kochumuttom

42. *Bagavadgīta*, 11.8

43. *Rgveda*, 10. 71. 72. 44. *Rgveda*, 8. 100. 10

45. *Rgveda*, 3. 100. 10. 46. *Rgveda*, 10. 71. 4.

The Image of Man in the Hindu Dharmasastras

The concept of man is one of the fundamental issues in the Hindu religious tradition. This paper is confined to the understanding of man found in the *Dharmaśāstras*, the law-books of the Hindus. *Dharmaśāstras* contain the rules of moral conduct which were in vogue right from the beginning of the Aryan culture. The sources of these rules are: the *Śruti* (the Vedas), the traditions of the forefathers (pre-vedic and Vedic), the practice of virtuous men and the satisfaction of a good conscience.¹ This traditional acceptance of the fourfold source of the moral laws presupposed an image of man which has both individual and social dimensions. The satisfaction of the good conscience mentioned above is the conscience of the individual man who practises the moral rules, while the practices and traditions of the forefathers are the social elements which contribute to the formation of the conscience of the individual man.

Among the *Dharmaśāstras*, *Manusmṛti*, otherwise called the Laws of Manu, is the most systematised collection of the laws and regulations of the Hindu religious heritage. We, therefore, refer consistently to the systematisation of Manu in order to understand the concept of man as outlined in the *Dharmaśāstras*. As a book on *Dharma*, *Manusmṛti* clearly states the context of the development of the laws of *dharma* in the social life of the Aryans. Man is straight away brought to the social context of the *Varṇas* or castes and therein his personal and social existence is fully described. The treatise, therefore, begins with an enquiry into the various forms of *dharma* to be followed by every individual being in his or her social context. Here man is understood as an individual who inherits all the duties as well as rights and privileges of a particular class of the complex society which is constituted by the various classes of people having varying degrees of nobility, honour, status and profession.

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1. *Gauṭama dharmasūtra* 1:1-2; *Apastamba dh. sutra* 1:1-2; *Vasishtha dh. sūtra* 1:4-6; *Manusmṛti* II: 6, 7, 10, 12, 18.

Man, primarily an ethical being

The image of man so vividly cast in the law-books, especially in *Manusmṛti*, is drawn predominantly with ethical strokes. Man is by birth endowed with a definite task. The usual name given to this task is *dharma*. *Dharma* means in general the essential feature of something, its form, function, character and its sustaining principle. When related to man, *dharma* means man's duty, his rights and obligations to the society. Every individual man has *his own dharma (svadharma)* to perform in the context of worship, personal discipline, career etc. So man is primarily a *dharmic* being; he is by nature orientated to the correct performance of a certain set of rules which govern his personal and social life. The presumption is that by the fact that one rightly and perfectly does his *duty* with respect to the different spheres of his life he automatically realises his goal of life; the goal of life, however, has been discovered to be the fuller realisation of the Self of God in every creature and in himself leading to a life of perfect union with the Absolute God,² it also implies a life of perfect harmony and detachment in righteousness.³

The demand of righteousness in every action is very basic to the understanding of man's duty, because each action of man produces a corresponding good or bad effect, merit or demerit. The meritorious actions are the ethically right actions which lead man to the liberation from the inordinate attachment to the worldly realities; the non-meritorious actions are the evil actions which cause the residue of actions subside in the soul and thereby make a man liable to transmigration, an indefinite number of births and deaths, which is known as the chain of *Karṃasamsāra*. Hence man's primary preoccupation should be the pursuit of right morality:

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2. "He who recognises the Self through the Self in all created beings, becomes equal minded towards all, and enters the highest state, Brahman" (Manu XII:125) and cf. XII:102; 118.
 3. Cf. Manu XII:118; cf. also XII:85, 91.

“Let everybody concentrating his mind fully recognize in the Self all things, both the real and the unreal; for he who recognizes the universe in the Self *does not give his heart to unrighteousness*”. (Manu XII: 118).

In the total perspective of one's goal of life it may be said that every ethical action is related to *Dharma*, because it is an ethical imperative so far as the final emancipation is concerned.

The main ethical imperatives, taken as different aspects of *dharmā*, may be enumerated as follows:

1. Duties arising from one's social allegiance to caste (*varṇa dharma*);
2. Duties respective of one's station in life (*āśrama dharma*);
3. Duties common to all men irrespective of caste or station or locality (*sāmānya dharma*);
4. Duties of the ruling people (*rāja dharma*);
5. Duties proper to certain occasions of religious and ritual significance (*naimittika dharma*);
6. Rules governing the distribution of merits and demerits of one's actions on the basis of the influence of the *guṇas* (the psychic adjuncts) on ethical actions as directed to the final emancipation (*guṇa dharma*).

Even at the first glance one can very well argue that the *Dharmaśāstras* are presenting the picture of man as an individual bound by duties and obligations mostly orientated to the realisation of his social goals in life. But this is only one side of the picture. Man is also gifted with innumerable rights and privileges by which men are grouped into higher and lower classes. The society is hierarchically constituted on the basis of the distribution of rights and privileges, which, according to Manu, are divinely ordained. It is on the basis of this fundamental divine distribution of gifts that the division of labour is also made. Hence the assignment of different occupations to the different rungs of the social ladder is primarily a legitimating reason in view of the welfare of the universe. Manu points out that the distribution of labour according to the nobility of the origin of each caste is proportionate to the common good of the social order which

is related to the wider Cosmic context; and this relationship is the *progressive evolution of the universe (lokanam vivrdhi)*.⁴

But the cosmic intentionality of the social hierarchy of mankind may not be a reality unless there is given an extension of this same intentionality to the field of the ethical conduct of man; because it is by the faithful and harmonious following of the ethical orders by all the classes of man that the cosmic welfare and progressive evolution of the society take place. So Manu has specifically pointed out the purpose of the assignment of the duties (*dharma*) differently to different *varṇas* of the society:

“In order to protect this universe, He, the most resplendent one, assigned separate duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet” (Manu I:87).

Thus the occupational division of men is another ethical imperative in view of achieving the universal prosperity which is the integral extension of the social progress. But it is not in the functional division of labour that the cosmic welfare is achieved but in the dutiful performance of the functions assigned to each class of people; the dutiful functioning, however, starts at the grass root level of the society, i.e., at the level of the individual. So fundamentally it is the *dharma* well performed with full responsibility by each individual man that is supporting the course of the social as well as the universal progressive evolution. In one word, it is the individual, ethically conscious man, that causes change in the world, of course, at various levels of the society. This further highlights the point that man is primarily an ethical being.

The Psychic Composition of Man

The ethical ‘ought’ dimension further points to the inner essence of man in the given social context. This is conspicuous.

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4. “For the sake of the prosperity of the worlds, He (Brahma) caused the *brāhmaṇa*, the *kshatriya*, the *vaiśya* and the *śūdra* to proceed from his mouth, his arms his thighs, and his feet respectively” (Manu I: 31).

because as a rule the natural characteristics and spontaneous inclinations of any man would determine to a great extent his 'oughts' and 'ought-nots'. Since Manu considers man to be the climax of the manifested order of creation, man's psychic levels could exhibit the ethical movements in the conscious level of one's ego. This amounts to say that, according to the general trend in all *dharmasāstras*, the ethical man is a psychologically well adjusted individual in relation to the absolute consciousness of God. But how are we to discover the levels of the psychic composition of man? The answer is rather complicated.

Man is constituted of a theo-psychic centrality. There is the divine spark of the Self of the Absolute Divinity (*Atman*) thrown into the self of man. The self of man expresses its theo-psychic centrality in his mind, is the first evolute of the Self of God who implanted it as the core or focus of the beings which possess a subject consciousness arising from their egos.⁵ Since mind is the instigator of all the actions,⁶ it is a dynamic force working from within the selfhood of man. As long as this mind is free from the association of *guṇas*, the psychic adjuncts, it is pure in its own nature. But the moment the self relies on the bodily organs of sensation the mind also depends on the material conditions of the body and thereby is limited by the elements of the body. However, man always realised his selfhood as he relates himself to the Self of God. Therefore the main concern of man is explained by Manu as a constant search for the Self of God in everything,⁷ primarily in his own self. This process of search demands ethical discipline and detachment from the adjuncts (*guṇas*) and their variations which disturb the equilibrium of the constitution of man.

The psychic centrality of man is further expressed by means of conscious actions. Consciousness is the masterly force in man.⁸ It gives luminosity to the self of man concerning his authenticity. It is only when he is consciously acting man is said to have the subject-consciousness. In the level of the subject-consciousness the self is the *mahat*, the great actor. It is from this activation of the authenticity of man that real issues in the moral life of

5. Manu I:14. 6. Ibid: 4. 7. Ibid XII:125.

8. Ibid I:14

man arise. All actions, therefore, whether meritorious or non-meritorious are attributed to man's ego by right of the selfhood that is in man. Hence Manu declares:

"Hear the decision concerning the whole connexion of actions: 'Know that the mind is the instigator here below, even to that action which is connected with the body, and which is of three kinds, has three locations, and falls under ten heads'.⁹

'Action, which springs from the mind, from speech, and from the body, produces either good or evil results; by action are caused the various conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest'.¹⁰

The above stated laws of Manu testify that there is an inner relationship between the psychic realm and the somatic levels of human actions. The man is highly ethically conscious about his doings not because of any external imposition on him but out of the interaction of the self of man on the bodily structure. The self of man, of course, is stated to be a spark of the Divine Self. So the authenticity of all actions is directly related to the self of man and thereby to the Self of God. The inference is that the consciousness of good and evil, the fundamental problem in morality, arises from within the self of man and not from outside influences. This is something unique in the *dharmaśāstric* tradition. So here again the concept of man is loaded with rich ethical implications. It means that the essential constitution of man is ethically oriented much more fundamentally than in any other direction. It also means that there is always an interaction of the psychic and physical spheres of man's existence. Once the instigation of the mind for action is steered, the body is left to act according to the natural functions of each organ. The interaction is felt in this that each action is attributed authentically to the agent but distributed with regard to its effects to the respective organ of action. Hence merit or demerit has to be sustained by the agent in his organs which correspond to the various actions. This is nothing but common sense ethics; and thus the man of Manu is a man of common sense. So he argues:

"A man obtains the result of a good or evil mental act in his mind, that of verbal act in his speech, that of a bodily act in his body".¹¹

The Functional Constitution of Man

Functionally man is constituted of two factors: One is the interior level of the self who knows the field of man's actions; this is called the *kshetrajna* (the knower of the field). The other factor is the *bhūtātman* which is the gross part of the same self in relation to the bodily adjuncts (*guṇas*).¹² The *kshetrajna* level of the self is closely associated with the *mahat*, the authentic self which responds to the stimuli from out side. Since it is by means of this association of the sensitive self that *mahat* feels pain or pleasure their relationship may be understood in terms of the subject and its faculty of operations. Thus *mahat* acts as the authentic subject of the concrete *jiva* (man) or the individual person and thereby it is the real *kshetrajna*, the knower of the field.

But in order to have its proper facultywise operations the *mahat* has to rely on the gross elements of the body. This dependence on the material conditions makes *mahat* (the real self) present in all cases of actions. There are three main areas of associations, the area of the operations of the mind, of the speech organs and of the bodily movements. Because of the three ways of associations possible with these areas of operations the *mahat* itself gets a threefold strength, similar to that of a rod (*danda*). Hence man has to operate with his three *dandas* namely, *manodanda*, *vāgdanda* and *kāyadanda*. The functional success of man depends on the effective controlling of these *dandas* by means of self-discipline. Hence a man who controls by his own moral discipline his three areas of actions is a *tridandin*, the master of three staffs, i.e., an authentic man who is a master of himself completely. In *Manuśmṛti* this is the high moral ideal that is expected of a man of sincere pursuit in social life, and his life will be a complete success.¹³

11. Ibid XII:8 12. Manu XII:12
12. Manu XII:12 13. Ibid XII:10-11

The Character Builders in Man

Any constant and repeated activity forms a stable habit or character in man. The psychology propounded by Manu and other law-givers consistently explains the working of three elements in man variously distributed according to the speciality of each individual. These elements are known by the name *guṇas*, the main function of which is habit formation. The *guṇas* are mainly responsible for the temperamental variations of individuals. The three *guṇas* are *satva* (principle of goodness), *rajas* (principle of active emotions), and *tamas* (principle of passivity). The areas of habit formation are the following:

“*Satva*, goodness, is declared to have the form of knowledge; *rajas*, activity, has the forms of love and hatred; *tamas*, darkness, stands for passivity or ignorance.”¹⁴

When a man experiences in himself a feeling of deep calm, inner peace, and a state of balance of mind with other faculties of the body he may be enjoying the *satvic* characteristics. But if he is troubled with mixed feelings of pain, pleasure, and strong emotions beyond his control he must be under the sway of the *rajasvic guṇa*; he is highly influenced by sensual objects of activity. Similarly if a man is under a delusion and inactive or irresponsive to stimulating external situations he might be under the influence of the *tamasic guṇa*.¹⁵ Thus the *guṇas* are supposed to build habits of different kinds in a man. The *guṇas* when adjoined to the self subsequent to the composition of the body display their own respective traits in particular actions. According to the degree of intensity of the *guṇas*, the actions done by each man are grouped into ‘excellent’, ‘middling’, and the ‘lowest’. The excellent actions are the study of *śāstras* (vedic sciences), *tapas*, (austerity) *jñāna* (knowledge), purity, control over the senses etc. But delight in undertakings, want of firmness, commission of sinful acts, continual indulgence in sensual pleasures etc., are the marks of the dominance of the emotional *guṇa* (*rajas*); so they are classified as middling compared to the excellent action which are due to the predominance of the *satva guṇa*. The lowest

14. Manusmṛti XII:26

15. Ibid XII:27-32

type of actions, covetousness, sleepiness, pusillanimity, cruelty, soliciting favours, inattentiveness etc., are due to the predominance of *tamas* over other *guṇas*.

The gradation of actions due to the predominance of the *guṇas* points to a psychic hierarchy even in the social order. This hierarchy is not necessarily based on the caste discrimination, but on the culture of each individual. Anybody following the *sāmānya dharma* (duties and disciplines common to all) can be a man of refined behaviour which is characteristic of cultural discipline. Hence the ethical hierarchy of persons is distinct from the social hierarchy of castes. A *brāhmin* will be ethically degraded into the status of a *śūdra* if he doesn't follow the vedic studies and thereby fails to get refined.¹⁶ On the contrary a man of the lowest social rank, say a *śūdra*, can attain the noble cultural level of a learned *brāhmin* by means of constant ethical culture.¹⁷ Thus in addition to the social criterion of culture the ethical criterion is more universal in the *dharmaśāstra* tradition concerning the determination of the character in any man.

The Psychic Superiority of Man

Among the various creatures there is a scale to determine the relative superiority of each species of living beings. The fundamental criterion of this grading is consciousness. While consciousness is the lording principle in man its lower degrees of participation are evident in other living creatures as their vital principle. On the basis of this supposition Manu grades all creatures as follows:

“Of created beings the most excellent are said to be those which are animated (*prāṇinah*); of the animated those which subsist by intelligence (*budhinaḥ*); of the intelligent, mankind (*narah*)” Manu 1:96).

By the word *narah* all human individuals are meant. Manu goes further to discover another grade of superiority even among the individuals on the basis of *dharma* preceded by the know-

16. Manu II:168; cf. *ibid.* 126; cf. IV:245.

17. Manu X:57; 63; 67; 127-128

ledge of God. Here, the knowledge of God is the same as the realisation of the selfhood of man as the spark of the Self of God. Because this is the highest moral ideal a man can attain, the conscious awareness that motivates correct ethical discipline is the principle of superiority among the members of the society:

"In whatever order a man who knows the true meaning of the Vedic science may dwell, he becomes even while abiding in this world, fit for the union with Brahma". (XII:102)

Thus the superiority of the rational beings is based on the psychological proximity to God. This superiority of man rests mainly in his *consciousness* which is the "*scrutinizing power with the eye of knowledge.*"¹⁸

Knowledge of the Self as the True Freedom of Man.

No ethical system that is centred around man can escape the problem of freedom. But the authors of the laws of dharma are concerned with a particular kind of freedom. The masters of *dharmaśāstras* deal with the metaphysical freedom that is the back bone of true ethical discipline. This freedom consists mainly in the scrutinizing power of man which is expressed in the spontaneous pursuit of right knowledge. The presupposition is that only right knowledge about the essence of things can liberate man from the bondage of *karma*. Freedom, therefore, consists in the right perception of the *Self of God (Atman)* in all things: Man if he could discover the image of God in everything, is capable of discovering his own image; and his own real image is the reflected Self of God in his soul.

Hence Manu steps up to assert that this freedom is a liberating kind of freedom which detaches man from other creatures and attaches him to the Absolute Self:

"He who equally recognizes the Self in all created beings, and all created beings in the Self, becomes liberated like an autocrat; and he realizes his own luminosity in which he pays homage to the True Self (Deity) alone".¹⁹

18. Manu II:8 19. Ibid XII:91

This implies that freedom is a result of right knowledge; because only right knowledge can make man free of the allurements of the worldly realities. So according to the general trend of the *dharmasāstras* that is expressed by Manu more precisely, among all the virtuous actions the knowledge of the *True Self of God* as present in all things is stated to be the most excellent; and it is science par excellence; because immortality is gained through that and thereafter no further transmigration is awaited²⁰.

This reminds us of the famous saying of Jesus Christ, the great moral teacher, as something very fundamental and universal:..... "the truth shall liberate you" (Jn 8:32)

Banares Hindu University
Varanasi

T. M. Manickam

20. Ibid XII:84-85

The Image of Man according to the "New Left"

I. The Approach

1. When a Christian journal inquires into the issue of *the image of man in the world religions*, it is presumably not out of mere curiosity and for pure information's sake. It is primarily, I suppose, because we are involved ourselves when posing this question, not only because most of the people around us belong to different religions in whose personal struggle, ideals and purpose in life we are interested. But far beyond this, while believing ourselves in the ultimate unity before God, we have to see those trends, tendencies, dynamics in the religions that similarly point towards a future consummation of mankind before the Absolute, and thus open ways for a more human, juster and a more perfect society.

The very fact that we are talking about the image of man in these world religions with their universal visions shows that we are not interested in man as such with his isolated characteristics but that we see man *as* a member of the religious communities turned to God. And it is not the actual man with his difficulties, ups and downs who is envisaged, but the man as he ought to be when totally committed to and converted by the Absolute.

2. In the light of all this it might be no longer surprising to find, among the articles on the image of man in the world religions, one on a modern vision on socialism which is represented by the revolutionary movements of the so called "*New Left*". Küng following Tillich widens the concept of religion as far as possible and includes in it all kinds of ideologies, "in which we can discern a commitment to some principle of ultimate validity to which are all other principles subordinate and which gives

life its ultimate meaning".¹ Among others communism, fascism and humanism belong to these so called "quasi-religions".

A number of writers, including some Catholic scholars, like G.A. Wetter, T. G. Blakeley, G. Fessard, have interpreted the system of Marxism-Leninism as a pseudo-religious phenomenon by comparing party and social institutions with those of the Christian Churches, and by drawing a parallel between the ways of communist expressions and authoritarian teaching, and the doctrinal and confessional forms in Christian theology and magisterium.

But here we are not concerned with doctrines for the doctrinal apparatus or the social and political organisations of the countries that try to put into practice the communist ideology. The interest of this paper is in the image of man according to the new international, revolutionary movements which are mainly supported by the younger generation of non-communist countries. They are often loosely or not at all organised, and are usually combined under the name of the "New Left". A multiplicity of Marxist, Leninist, Trotskyst or Maoist individuals, groups and associations belong to them; they have, however, certain principles, goals and ways of thinking in common, among which the socialist transformation of society is the most important.

II. The Image of Man before the Revolution

To understand their intentions, ideals and aims, one has to see them against the background of modern society, of which they form an unhappy, discontented and frustrated part. Out of their existential situation they analyse this society and formulate a negative image of the existing man.

1. In the western countries the young generation is dissatisfied not because they have to worry about jobs and money, but because of the society's attitude towards jobs and money. It is precisely since they have a rather advanced standard of life that they realize much more deeply how the all-in-all importance of

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1. H. Küng, *The World Religions in God's Plan of Salvation: Christian Revelation and World Religions*. London 1967, 47.

money in modern society alienates man from himself and each other. The reason for realizing so clearly that money has taken possession of man is this : in the beginning of industrialisation the majority of people needed money just to survive and so the feverish striving for money could be justified. Now on the basis of a decent standard of life modern man can no longer persuade himself that economic values are more important in his life than genuine human values.

2. But ultimately one cannot blame for this man alone, he is the victim of the almighty economic, capitalist system. Private ownership and the principle of competition guarantee the economic growth of a country. Thereby it is a matter of course that private owners of firms and factories are primarily interested in their own profit, workers and employees working for them are mere means for their economic increase. Forced by strong competition from other branches of industry the maximal profit mainly for further investments must be secured. In this process only the best workers, that is, most efficient and successful, survive. Thus only the worker's performance, not the worker himself is of any interest for society. He becomes a screw in the machinery of production.

3. This then is the image of man today: he is frustrated, because he is exploited by the few. He is not the master of what he produces. He is perverted by being made to adhere excessively to some secondary values. Success, signified by the importance of money, is the criterion for the worth of human life. Achievement and accomplishment are the foremost virtues leading to success. This success is possible only by eliminating others in competition; power predominates. Any form of community is contrary to a competitive life, which is lived not for but at the expense of others. Man as social being does not exist any longer. A person in a capitalist society is a solitary individualist. The results of life in such a society are restlessness, strain, nervous breakdown, solitude, lack of freedom and security. Escape from this can be provided only by dull entertainment.

4. This is a very simplified account of how a revolutionary would analyse a modern, non-communist society and see the im-

age of man in it. There is no need to mention that this description seems so true because it is so logical, but that the reality of life is much more complex and, of course, much more positive. One has to reject that man is nothing but the result of an economic system. Nevertheless man suffers enough misery rooted in the process mentioned above.

III. The Image of Man after the Revolution

1. One who has some time or other grasped that the existing world with its structures, power and control is the wrong and perverse one, will dedicate his whole life to the service of overturning this world, and will live for the *revolution*, because the right, the no-longer-wrong world lies in the future. Revolution is, therefore, a reversion of the wrong perversion, is negation of the negation. Only by totally negating the existing world, the positive, new and real world appears. There is no longer any place for reforms; they will merely strengthen the existing system. Only when they serve as a strategy for the preparation of the revolution to overthrow the system, may they be supported.

2. Such an ideology about the radical difference between the existing world and the ideal humanity makes sense only when there is underlying it an absolute that justifies this worldview. This absolute is the conviction and belief that the real man is by his nature perfect.

This means that in future as a socialised being he will be in total harmony with society. He will do what society needs, and society will provide for him what he wants. The immediate effect of this attitude will be the abolition of money. The individual will get free what he requires, because society knows that he would never demand any thing beyond what he really needs.

He will be the master of what he produces, as the private possession of production-means will be abrogated. Therefore, a classless society will emerge, since after the removal of private property special interests in the social sphere won't exist any longer, and thus the state with its oppressive power would become superfluous. The radical equality of all men resulting from

this, will give them total freedom. Man will be liberated from any control and authority. According to young Marx, he will be a perfect man, who no longer works but effortlessly produces, who fishes, hunts, paints or criticizes whenever he feels like doing so, without being a fisher, a hunter, a painter or a critic.

3. This vision of perfect man is a radical utopia, and is of quasi-religious, absolute validity for the revolutionary believer. On the one hand it lacks foundation in reality, in human experience and history, but on the other hand it motivates the revolutionary to commit his whole life to the accomplishment of this goal. This vision can be called a social utopia, because, while suffering from the meaningless existing world order, man projects the picture of a perfect society longing for righteousness, which can only be realised in a human community as such.

At the same time the whole strength of a religious challenge and prophecy enters into this vision. Here the question arises whether the commitment to this ideal and thus the ideal itself rest ultimately on the belief in God. Originally upto modern times religious yearning in the western world found its concretisation in the revelation of a messianic age in which through God's decisive act the redemption of mankind would be achieved. Since the Enlightenment, however, the religious eschatology lost more and more its reality and effective value. The religious ideas and eschatological hopes have to be, according to Feuerbach and Marx, dissolved into human realities. Thus the closed cycle of human misery ought to be protested against; but the very idea of protest is betrayed when religion directs protesting man in his need to the power of a God. In such a case protest itself is no longer understood, since it takes for granted that the wrong world against which it protests will remain as it is. Religion becomes an ideology.² The God of the religions is rejected as man's projection and means of escape. Modern revolutionaries follow Marx in this point. Thus their "religious" commitment to the vision of a perfect society can only be rooted in the direct confrontation with the ambiguous life-situations themselves.

2. C. Link, *Theologische Perspektiven nach Marx und Freud*. Stuttgart 1971, 28ff, 48ff.

It seems that the Christian Churches have to learn a lot from this. Theologians too easily tend to envisage a perverted world against the horizon of God's universal loving will, and in this total vision they conclude that He is really present and experienced as challenging only in history; that is, in concrete life-situations. In this sense the yet-unfulfilled task of changing this perverted world must be only endured, and not dissolved by a systematic presentation of God who rules the world and in whom, therefore, one may take refuge. In the sphere of the existential task itself the reality of the challenging Absolute may be found. Thus the Absolute is not manifest in the *absoluteness* of a future ideal man and perfect society, which are the expression of the inner logic of an ideology, not of faith in God, but in what *drives* the revolutionary to this absolute ideal. It does not make sense, therefore, for him to introduce God in the future-perfect mankind, since the vision of this future is the work of his own mind as the negation of what exists now. But the impetus to formulate the ideal, to suffer from the discrepancy between what is and *ought* to be, the readiness to fight for the good, is the reality where he transcends himself and his time. Here is the ground for his quasi-religious commitment; the utopian ideal will motivate him, but again this ideal is only the result and concretisation of his basic urge to act and to be beyond what he and the world around him is. Usually members of these modern revolutionary groups don't believe in God, but they certainly experience Transcendence in their lives, that might lead them one day to a full understanding of God.

All this is confirmed by the fact that from a scientific point of view the image of the perfect man in the future is founded on nothing but the removal of all the obstructive structures of the existing world. But the apocalyptic leap of humanity during the revolution from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, the total transcendence of man beyond what he was before, can no longer be scientifically explained by it. Between reality and expectation lies the abyss, as Paul Tillich says. The utopian faith proclaims that in the framework of the right structure man cannot do wrong any longer, he is perfect.

IV The Image of the Revolutionary

1) There are two totally different images of man : the man of today and the man of the future. It might be interesting to see which image those who stand between a society they reject and a society of tomorrow they proclaim and expect, represent. The position of a revolutionary is extremely difficult; he lives as it were in a vacuum, between two societies, an existing and non-existing one. He judges, analyses and values from the point of view of the non-existing one, and that makes him very intolerant. He proclaims absolute freedom, but by wanting it for himself, he has paradoxically to oppress others who don't agree with him. The demand for absolute freedom and totalitarianism are closely related to each other, because total freedom for an individual can be achieved only at the expense of the freedom of all the others.

The revolutionary cannot dialogue and compromise with the man of this society, since, perverted by the existing capitalist system, it does not know yet what man is supposed to be and has, therefore, if necessary to be forced to the true understanding of man. Even the allusion to the fact, above all, that young intellectual revolutionaries very often know nothing of the workers and their problems, does not help much, since they pretend to know a priori what *real* workers are supposed to need and to be. The actual needs and wishes of workers contrary to the revolutionary goal are the sign of their being spoilt by the capitalist system. Obviously such a standpoint is the expression of an intellectual arrogance. It indicates that they are conscious of their mission and of being an elite amidst a mass of people who do not have the true knowledge. It also manifests, however, some defensive attitude. The logic of their theory, to which they fanatically cling, need not be weakened [by the experience of the complexity of human life.

Consistent with the principle of assessing the existing society from the point of view of the new perfect one, they necessarily have to be very negative in outlook. Almost everything that exists is wrong, and what is right and good should not be supported so as not to strengthen the wrong structures; only in as far as it can be used for the destruction of the system

should it be encouraged. Here again they are condemned to live in this – one might almost say – schizophrenia between the proclamation of an ideal society and the actual work of destruction. Even positive work is not the development of real human values, but a strategy to prepare the revolution. This negative attitude often finds expression in sarcasm and humourlessness.

2) But one has to admire the commitment to an ideal, for which they are prepared to sacrifice everything in their lives. Many get converted from a mediocre, passive, egoistic way of living to a devoted mode of life for their ideas. They develop remarkable courage and discipline to stand up for their demands against injustice. Underlying the rejection of any authority is the committed obedience of their entire personality to the vision of a free society. But here again in the prerevolutionary time all the positive sides become usually only effective in a negative way.

V. Towards a New Man

1) No man can totally live in the future and neglect entirely the present. Unless the vision of a new humanity remains pure faith, it is not sufficient to try to remove the obstacles for this perfect society, but already now in the pre-revolutionary age the positive foundations of this society must be laid.

From the beginning of socialism these two ways of bringing about a free and perfect world stood in contrast to each other.³ One group with socialists like Saint Simon, Fourier Owen, Proudhon, etc., believed in the possibility of appealing to man's reason, sense of justice, to his will to set right the distorted structures of an inhuman society and to start with the help of all the decentralising tendencies in a capitalist state building up kernels and centres of communities so that finally society would be interiorly prepared for a revolution and after that for the new life of perfect man in a future world.

Marx and Engels ridiculed such a voluntaristic socialism as "utopian socialism", as it still believed in the developmental possibility of this distorted existing society. According to their

3. Martin Buber, *Der utopische Sozialismus*. Köln 1967, especially 19–32.

socialism a development towards revolution takes place with absolute historical necessity, and must only be put into effect by strategic actions. Change of "substructures like family, school, local community, can never bring about a transformation of the structure of the total social system; they must perish on account of the opposition immanent in the structure itself. In other words man cannot be changed without a prior change of the total economic and political system.

From what has been said above it is obvious that the "New Left" also adheres in general to this view, though in the beginning many groups put the emphasis for the sake of enlightenment on a "revolution of consciousness" and tried to promote spontaneity and initiative of the "basis".

Is there, then, any hope for man to live now in this particular age? It seems that the "utopian socialism" is less utopian than the view of those who expect like a miracle the new world only after the revolution. Without a change of man himself any change of a structure is futile and gives only the dead skeleton of a superstructure which can be upheld only by a strong central power—the true perversion of that future society which was originally aimed at.

2) Revolutionary socialist movements have a great influence on the younger generation in South East Asia. And one should not forget that the youth form about sixty percent of the population in many Asian countries. If Christianity's universal vision of love and righteousness should have any effect on Asian countries in the future, it ought to participate in the struggle for a better and more human life of the people.⁴ The Church should be shaken up by the radicalism of the revolutionaries' commitment to the cause of justice, but she should also see her corrective role, when there are onesided and fanatical excesses, which are usually evoked because of the utopian dreams of a new world.

Banares Hindu University
Varanasi.

Norbert Klaes

4. T. Balasurya, *The Asian Revolutionary Process and Integral Evangelisation: Service and Salvation*, Bangalore 1973, 467-86.

The Holy Worldliness of Guru Nanak's Religion

Guru Nanak occupies a permanent place in the galaxy of the prophetic personalities that India has produced. He has left behind him a vision and style of life different from those of the generality of the Hindu brethren. He was a genius and prophet with an uncanny capacity to judge the contemporary situation, to see things in an integrated unity, to look into the future and to present a new vision and life-style that would re-create the whole society. At present, when age old religious institutions, customs and beliefs are crumbling and there is a search for new forms for expressing man's innate religiosity, Guru Nanak's protest against meaningless religious practices and his insistence on experiencing God in and through one's daily life acquire a new significance and relevance.

Guru Nanak was born in the latter half of the fifteenth century. His was a time of social and political turmoil in North India, especially in the Punjab. The common people were subjected to the most unreasonable upheavals and hardships in life. Politically the Punjab was in a confusion. The last of the Hindu kings of the Punjab, Anangapal, had been overthrown almost 400 years ago in 1021 A.D. The Moguls were ruling the Punjab. They used all their might to suppress and exploit the Hindus.

The religious situation was not any better. The Hindu religion had become a ritualistic, brahminical sect that had little concern for the life and problems of the ordinary man. Islam was sowing death and ruin everywhere in the name of Allah and the Holy Law. Religion divided men into warring factions and was no more a unifying force that drew man to the experience of the Divine. It was a time of outmoded religious structures and empty institutional religion. Both in Hinduism and in Islam even the religious leaders were struggling for survival. Rituals assumed a magical role that helped the devotees to escape from the hard realities of life.

Opposition to "Religion"

It was against this milieu that young Nanak had to teach. He saw that religion and holiness were wrongly understood. He stood against everything that made man 'religious' in its pejorative sense. Nanak, after three days of spiritual retreat at Sultanpur Lodhi, declared: "There is no Hindu; there is no Muslim." He was voicing the deep feelings of the millions of his truly religious countrymen; the barriers that separate a Muslim from a Hindu should disappear. He knew that only the true religion of the heart could survive and purify man. He awakened the basic religiosity of man.

"Without the Lord how can one cheer?
Through his mercy does one meet him.

.....
I see God anew both as friend and mate
Too arduous is the path I have taken
Sharper than the double edged sword."¹

"Guru Nanak did not teach anything new, but whatever he said bore the impress of originality and displayed the genius of a master mind", said G. C. Narang evaluating the religious contribution of Guru Nanak. Nanak did not teach a new creed; but he impressed upon his hearers the true spirit of the creed they had already believed in.

Nanak was distrustful of rites and rituals. Few have recognised so well as Guru Nanak that faith in God did not commit a man to travel down the religious ways. Nanak's protest is not directed against form as much, but against the assumption that certain forms have intrinsic and inalienable meaning simply because they are religious. He once said; "At the place of pilgrimage, no bath avails without His favour."² He taught that if religious practices had their own immanent and inalienable value, religion would easily become magic. They do not

1. Raj Suhi p. 794.

2. *The Japuji*, A book of Psalms by Guru Nanak, tr. by John Clark Arches and comprising pp. 120-123 in John Clark Arches, *The Sikhs*, Princeton University Press, 1946. Psalm 6.

offer the individual access to the holy, but bar him from it by fostering the illusion that man could manipulate the will of God.

Once Nanak made a comment on the ceremony of the sacred thread which the upper class boys were put through: "Countless thefts, villainies, falsehoods and blasphemies are going on; countless deceptions are practised and countless secret sins are carried within the soul, day and night. And yet a thread is spun out of cotton and the Brahmin's duty ends with twisting it. A goat is killed, cooked and eaten and then all think the thread is worth putting on"³

On the positive side using the symbols of the ceremony, Guru Nanak sought to bring out the deeper significance that the ceremony should convey: "From the cotton of mercy make threads of contentment and then with knots of continence, apply twist of righteousness. The thread prepared in this way will be of use to the soul".⁴ Thus his insistence was always on an inner refinement, on bringing the heart to rest in eternal peace rather than shuffling through empty rituals.

There is also another interesting incident narrated in one of the Janam Sakhis of Guru Nanak which tells how he opposed hollow rituals. At Hardwar "some people were throwing water towards the Sun while they bathed in the Ganges. 'O men, what are you doing?' said the Guru. 'We are offering water to our dead ancestors living in the Sun', said they. At this, the Guru began throwing water in the opposite direction with both hands. When they asked what strange thing he was doing, he replied, "I am watering my fields of wheat in the Punjab."⁵ When the crowds laughed, Nanak suggested to the pilgrims that his watering was probably as effective for the wheat in the Punjab as was theirs for the ancestors living in the Sun.

3. Naram Singh, *Guru Nanak Re-interpreted*, Amritasar, 1965. p. 221.

4. Naram Singh p. 82.

5. Puran Singh, *The first Master - Guru Nanak*, Punjabi University Press, 1969, p. 17.

Guru Nanak did not question the sincerity of the pilgrims at Hardwar. His protest was against the formalistic rites of religion. In the *Japuji* he describes how religious observances may become meaningless and not only not evoke religious experience, but even bar man from his inner existential involvement:

“Pilgrimage and penance and free will giving
Gain for one no single grain of merit
Unless one hearken and his heart be loving
Cleansed within by a meditative bath”. (Psalm 21)

Nanak had a profound sense of the holy, its all pervading presence in creation and its fascinating transcendence. So he believed that God and man's relation to him could not completely be couched in these formalities, nor were they utterly essential for man to commune with him.

Once he was in Mecca, the holy city of Islam. “The Guru entered the holy precincts. He lay down to rest. Then he fell asleep. His feet were stretched towards the Ka’aba. It was the time for evening prayer. Qazi Ruku - Ud - Din came to say his namaz. When he beheld him lying in this posture, he spoke out, “O thou man of God, See! thou stretchest thy feet towards the house of God, the Ka’aba. Dost thou not see? The Guru answered: “Where the house of God is not, turn my feet to that direction”⁶ That was Nanak's conviction of the immanence of God.

He condemned the sectarian views that kindled the fire of communalism. In Mecca, many learned divines and pilgrims came to the Guru and began to question him. They wanted to know who was superior, the Hindu or the Muslim. The Guru answered: “Without good deeds both would come to grief. In God's court no one was accepted as Hindu or Muslim”.

The Holiness of the world:—

Nanak did not stop by decrying the malpractices and abuses of religion. He advocated the spirit of true religion. His was a secular religion, its basis being the firm conviction in the im-

6. Puratam Janam Sakhi pp. 115-19, quoted in *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith* by Hasban Singh, p. 116.

manence of God. God pervades the whole world and dwells in the minds and hearts of the faithful. He creates, sustains and cherishes all things: "The whole creation that I see, it came of his exertion" (Ps. 6).

Guru Nanak writes: "I see the light hid within me spontaneously"⁷ "When I look carefully I see no other than God. The one God pervadeth all places; the one God dwelleth within heart"⁸

In Guru Nanak's view religion becomes and must become the enemy of the holy when and if the rites and rituals of the temple render men indifferent to the world outside the temple so that the pervasive presence of God and his concern for the world are forgotten. Religion becomes a self-destructive counterforce when it creates an attitude of over security and imagined certainty. Nanak preached that the Lord who is acknowledged in the temple should be accepted as one whose moral demands confront the self in every situation.

The story of Nanak at Kurukshetra illustrates that when the practice of piety becomes surrogate for morality, religion diverts man from the holy: "During a great fair, the Guru was at Kuruksetra. He asked Mardana (a disciple) to go and set fire to cook his meals. And Mardana went and touched the fire of an 'Orthodox'. The orthodox cried out in rage, fell upon Mardana; whereupon the Guru said: "The evil is still in his mind, hatred resides in the heart: and yet his cooking square is pure. Of what use are these lines of the square when low caste thoughts still sit with-in his mind?"

This world and the life in it are holy if it is lived with a heart devoted to the Lord, and in solidarity with fellowmen. There is no sacred sphere beside and beyond the secular to which only a few could approach.

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7. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, translated by Gopal Singh Vol. 1. p. 57.
 8. Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. I. p. 5.

Nanak preached a religion unique in its kind. It emphasised the oneness of Godhead. It was not an organized religion. No priestly class was founded. Any one, man or woman, competent to recite and explain the hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib, might conduct the religious services in the Sikh temples and lead the congregation in prayer. Men of all castes and creeds had access to the Gurudwaras and they could join the congregation there and partake the sacred *prasāda* and of the meals served in the community kitchen or *Guru ka langar*. He removed all taboos about eating. No rite or ritual was instituted. Even the differences of scriptures of different religions were abolished:-

“The Vedas proclaim with one voice that He is boundless
The Semitic books mention eighteen hundred worlds
But the reality behind all is the one Principle”.

The Vedas, the Puranas, and all other sacred books speak of One God. All that was demanded was devotion to the Lord and do the duties of life as demanded of us by the will of the Lord.

Religion for man

Religion is the relationship of man to God. It is for the sake of man and for the realisation of his life's goal. So Nanak rejected all outdated and meaningless ceremonies as dead weights on the life of the people. Nanak advocated a direct approach to God with a simple heart. He was baffled by the variety and complexity of religious rites and practices. He once remarked that the Lord should be smiling at the variety of human attempts to reach him. He emphasised that God needed no temple or place to manifest, except the temple of our heart. Taking the tradition of Hindu Bhakti movement and Muslim Sufi mysticism Nanak emphasised the role of the Name of God and the need to call upon it. Nanak applied this worship of the Name to all concrete situations of human life. It became a homely reality. “Harkening to the Name God” became central to his religion.

“Harkening to the Name bestows
Truth, divine wisdom, contentment.
To bathe in the joy of the Name,

Is to bathe in the holy places.

.....

By hearkening to the Name,
Sorrow, and sin are destroyed".⁹

Thus he stressed the central spirit of religion and denounced the orthodox dogmas, decried the theologians and ridiculed the learning that sought only form but ignored the spirit. Miracles and mythologies are valueless, devoid of spirit. A stone God and an illusory devotee can never satisfy each other. It is sheer hypocrisy to do worshipful acts in the expectation of worldly rewards. Mere bodily purification without the spirit of the heart is absolutely useless. What is essential and enough is to empty the mind of all its innate desires and fill it with devotion to God. Spiritual stature is judged not with reference to the mode of external behaviour but by the sincerity and earnestness of the inner self. Religion relates not to books, nor to theories, nor to dogmas, nor in talking higher things, nor even in learned and logical reasoning.

"Love the saints of every faith and cast off pride
Remember, the essence of religion is humility and compassion,
Not the purification of the body adorned with good garments
Nor the Yogis' garb and ashes nor the blowing of horn,
Not the shaven head nor any tedious rituals,
Nor recitations and torturings nor the ascetic way,
But a life of goodness, purity and devotion,
Amidst all the world's cares and temptations."

Nanak's secular life

Not only his teaching but his life too was a living witness to the religion he preached. He went on a pilgrimage to desecralize the practices and educate the people on the true spirit of religion. He wore a peculiar pilgrim garb, combination of the dress of Hindu Sadhu and Muslim Fakir, to symbolically represent how one should transcend the limits of narrow religious practices. Every where he had one message: the unity of all religions and the futility of ceremonial worship.

9. *Suniaī sat santokh gyan.*

His pilgrimage was not to visit idols but to instruct people. So his iconoclasm did not end in an empty secularism. His goal was to deepen the religious experience of the people by liberating them from dead structures, and bring about a greater commitment to the facts of daily life. He was against constructing holy places and temples for God. God's abode is the interior living temple of man's heart.

Nanak's religion is founded on its deep humanism. It is in and through the service of men and in sincere love that God has to be approached. "Dedicate thy self to service in the world. And thou gettest a seat in the Lord's court. Sayeth Nanak, 'Thus wilt thou live in everjoy'"¹⁰ Life in the world does not contradict life in the spirit. What is asked for is a change in one's attitude. Just as one can work for oneself or for another, likewise one may work for the Lord of life. Guru Nanak never asks that one give up his life in the world by turning away from it. Again and again in his songs he speaks of only changing our attitude to the world and never to shun it.

Guru Nanak asks that we cultivate our virtues always taking into consideration those who are around us. He said: "Those who toil to earn their living and then share their earnings with others have found the true way".¹¹

The unity of all life is to be found by reaching outward with greater responsibility, to take into consideration all peoples, "to be humble before everyone and call no one bad".¹² Guru Nanak compares man's life in the world with the lotus in the pond. The lotus grows through the mud and the water, and yet keeps detached from both".¹³ It brings forth its flowering perfection above both.

He did not preach withdrawal from life, but only withdrawal from identifying the partial with the total life. God was not a static contemplative concept, but a dynamic one. God meant

10. Gopal Singh, op. cit. p. 29.

11. Gopal Singh, Vol. IV, p. 29.

12. Macauliffe, p. 12.

13. Gopal Singh, Vol. III, p. 946.

love-and service to fellow humans. God meant responsibility. To seek God was to be good, and that was to be done in the human context.

The strong activist element in Nanak's teaching has made Sikhism a faith of active concern for other human beings. It is the emphasis on active involvement in man's world here and now that led Sikhism to concern itself seriously with the problems of community organization. Nanak was a revolutionary who vehemently attacked social evils - communalism and castism. By posting a reality beyond the existing caste order, Nanak gave a basis for the people to seek the ideal humanistic equality.

He was a practical man - one with the men of this world. He spoke to the people in the language of the people and explained his ideas to them with examples drawn from everyday common life. His choice of Gurumukhi as the language of religion was typical of the character of his new religion. Sanskrit was the religious language of the Hindus. It was considered to be the language of the gods, heavenly language. Instead of Sanskrit Nanak chose the earthly language of the people, the mother tongue of the Punjabis. Religion is for man, not for gods. The language symbolises this secular concern.

He established the institutions of Sangat, the community of the disciples gathered at the feet of the Guru, and Pangat, sitting of all people together in rows for community dining. To divide the one community of humanity in the name of caste and religion is denial of religion, he taught. Wherever he went, he established Sangats - congregations of his followers. There they met daily, generally in the evenings to listen to the Guru's teachings, sing hymns and to pray to God, and discuss and find solution to their common problems. It was in these Sangats that the Sikh-Sishyas learnt practical lessons of religion. It was here that Sikhs shook off their old prejudices and rubbed off their angularities. There they came closer to one another as brothers and understood their real relationship as sons of the One Creator. This popularised among them the use of the word 'Bhai', or brother, for all without the discrimination of religion. True equality was advocated: "There is no restriction among them that

a Brahmin may not become the disciple of Khatri, for Nanak was a Khatri and no Guru among them was from the Brahmins as has been described. Similarly they placed Khatri under the authority of the Jats who belong to the low caste of vai-shyas....."¹⁴

The common meal fostered unity and fellowship. The tenth and the last Guru Gobind Singh went a step further. On the introduction of the baptismal ceremony for the order of the Khalsa, he made the initiates drink the baptismal water, the Amrita, one after another, from one and the same vessel, in a double round – the first man becoming the last to drink it in the second round. Absolute equality is symbolised here. Later history of the Sikhs shows how they translated it into daily life. William Irvine tells us in his *Later Mughals*: “In all the paraganas occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal of the previous custom was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short space of time he would return to his birth place as its ruler with his order of appointment in his hand (vol. I, p. 98-99).

Five symbols

The five symbols, popularly called as the five K's of the Sikh religion, were later introduced, to represent the secular concern of Sikhism. The symbols are – Keśa (hair), Kanga (comb), Kirpan (sword), Karā (bracelet), and Katcha (undergarment). Long unshaven hair is the symbol of manliness, virility, honour, power, aggression and so on, but not of any religious significance. J. P. Singh Uberoi in his essay 'The Five symbols of Sikhism' relates it with initiation ceremony and points out its secular nature: “I want to suggest that at least one cultural meaning of the Sikh initiation rite was that it stood as the antithesis of the rites of Hindu renunciation”¹⁵ A part of the initiation rite to the state of Hindu *Sanyāsa* is “to shave off one's beard, moustaches and

14. Ibid, p. 233, Maubid Sulfiqar Ardistani, 2 Dabistan-i-Mazaheb.

15. *Sikhism*, Guru Nanak Quincentuary Celebration Series, Patiala, p. 128.

head, retaining only the scalp-lock". It was the symbol of total renunciation and death to the life in the world; But the Sikh initiation rite contains a marked theme of inversion in relation to the rites of social renunciation established by the medieval mendicant orders that preceded Sikhism". Whereas they had sought to obtain emancipation and deliverance through undivided renunciation as the price, as their rites signify, the Sikh community was to affirm the normal social world as itself the battleground of freedom.

"The meaning of being unshaven, in particular, is thus constituted by the negation of negation; it signifies the permanent renunciation of renunciation"¹⁶

The third Guru Amardas positively prevented the growth of asceticism and other-worldliness within the community. The ascetic element of the *Udasis* were separated from the main community, and these followed Sri Chand, Nanak's son.

Following initiation the *Sanyāsi* custom is either to shave off the whole hair or wear all. When long hair is worn, it is kept matted (*jaṭa*) frequently dressed in ashes. But according to the Sikh custom the unshaven hair is invariably associated with the comb (*kanga*) which constrains and imparts the hair an orderly arrangement. "The *jaṭa* symbolises the renunciation of social citizenship; *kēsa* and *kanga* symbolizes its orderly assumption"¹⁷

The *kirpan* and the *kara* similarly constitute another pair of symbols. The steel bracelet imparts the same orderly control over the sword which the comb does the hair. The *kirpan* in its conjoint meaning with *kara*, is a sword ritually constrained. It shows man's involvement in the society to defend one's honour and land; but to do it in order.

The *katcha* is a "sartorial symbol signifying manly reserve in commitment to the procreative world as against renouncing it altogether. Thus the aspect of assertion and the aspect of con-

16. Ibid. p. 31.

17. Ibid. p. 131.

straint combine to produce what we may call for want of a better word the spirit of affirmation characteristic of Sikhism"¹⁸

The role of the Guru

As a leader of the common people, Nanak emphasised the role of the Guru in the community. Guru was a spiritual guide. Sikh means sishya or disciple, and Sikh religion is the community of the disciples. Guru is only a director; he is not God, nor is he the divine incarnation. In the Sikh tradition there were ten Gurus, beginning with Guru Nanak. The last of the Gurus was Gobind Singh. He gave the *Adi Granth* as the Guru for all times, which is thus rightly called the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Hence the sacred book has the highest and most honoured place in the Sikh temple which is aptly called 'Gurudwara'. Guru is a guide; he is to be consulted, never to be worshipped. He is not even a prophet like Mohammed. "At God's gate there is no room for a prophet", Nanak once told a Muslim.

Concern for material needs

Religion has to embrace the whole man, including his material needs. Sikh religion was born and lived in the everyday life of man. Guru Nanak had little appreciation for the life of the *siddhas* and *yogis* who forsook the world oblivious of their social duties and obligations towards their fellowmen. He once complained: "The earth is all seized by sin; the accomplished saints and sages, and the *siddhas* are hiding themselves in the recesses of mountains. Who is there to save the world?"

The idea behind the *Guru ka langar* (common kitchen) of Sikhism is this concern for the needy. Even now at the golden temple in Amritsar, the common kitchen caters to the needy and the pilgrims who come there.

Guru Gobind Singh instituted the *khalsa*, the consecration of an elite band of warriors to defend the community against the attack of the enemies. This ceremony reminiscent of the traditional consecration of the idols in the temple implied that the real protectors of the people were not the mute idols in

18. Ibid. p. 132.

traditional place of worship but a band of courageous men religiously dedicated to the service of the community.

Classless society

Unlike Brahminism which created and flourished on the class distinction among the people, Guru Nanak welcomed into his *pangat* and *sangat* all without distinction. He wanted to establish a classless society. When Guru Arjun Singh built the temple at Amritsar, he had its foundation laid by a Muslim divine. In sharp distinction he constructed four entrances open to all the four sides. The Guru Granth Sahib, which was collected by the fifth Guru Arjun contains hymns composed by Hindu and Muslim mystics.

Secular Ethics

If we look into the moral code of do's and don'ts that Guru Nanak gave his disciples we easily find a long list of virtues to be practised and vices to be renounced—all with a social relevance. His religion gives no place for the renunciation of a *sanyāsin*. He emphasised that a householder could attain the highest possible spiritual accomplishment, if only he were to cultivate purity of mind, earnestness of purpose and intense devotion. This was a unique reconciliation of worldly life and spiritual aims. Motiveless, selfless and disinterested discharge of duty as a householder is acceptable to and approved of the Almighty because they are performed in the spirit of self denial and self-surrender. He lives with and acts in the physical world as a witness. Guru Nanak's words illustrate:

“And this I have learnt
That he is true to his faith
Who loves God and man
And, serving all, abides in the Good”.

Sikhism today

Today Sikhism has departed much from the original path laid by Guru Nanak. It has become a separate religion, a religion among religions with its own distinctive marks. The regionalism, especially of the language, that once gave it the earthy flavour has now become a hindrance to its universality. The ‘religion’

which was supposed to bring together Hindus and Muslims unfortunately became a third entity. Moreover, with the introduction of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs of the khalsa institution positively consider it sinful to associate with either Hindus or Muslims. Thus sectarianism of a new style has crept into Sikhism.

However, Nanak's religion shows a concern for the secular plane. In the name of God, Nanak became a critic of what was religious and a friend of what was not. He provides a paradigm for the man of faith in the modern world. The quest for the holy as well as a serious investigation of the actualities of our common life transcend the distinction between the sacred and the secular. The polarity of the sacred and the secular is foreign to the spirit of the Sikh tradition. In it there is an equal commitment to the life in the world as well as criticism of what is religious. In Guru Nanak we see a man, grasped by the holy and led away from the distinctions between the religious and the secular. In that life lies a profound moral for our time and perhaps the greatest resource for the redeeming of the times. Nanak found reason and strength in the holy to venture outside and beyond the temple. Beneath his worldliness and mysticism lay the conviction that man is the architect of his own destiny on this earth, even though salvation comes from God alone.

Delhi University
New Delhi.

Jose^x Kuriedath

Book Review

H. Saddhatissa, *The Budha's Way* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971). pp. 139; with plates; £2. 75. Available in India from BLACKIE & SON (INDIA) Ltd., Blackie House, 102/5, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Bombay - 400001.

The message of the Buddha possesses an ever-fresh actuality, and that is why studies on the great master's teachings and their significance for modern man keep on appearing. The book we are reviewing is written by the Venerable H. Saddhatissa, a native of Ceylon who received his ordination in 1926, and is now a Mahā-thera. He did his studies at the Universities of Banaras, London and Edinburgh, and received his Ph. D. from the last-mentioned University. Saddhatissa is well versed in Pali, Sanskrit, etc., has lectured both in the east and in the west, and has also been professor at the Universities of Banaras and Toronto. He is a member of the prestigious Pali Text Society of London, and is now the president of the British Mahabodhi Society and the Sangha Council of Great Britain; he is the author of several books on Buddhism. Being a monk, Saddhatissa has the experience of life so necessary to write about the Buddha's message, and the fact that he is a scholar gives him the required competence.

The present work, which includes a number of attractive illustrations, is divided into three parts. Part One begins with a succinct account of the master's life (pp. 19 - 23), and then deals with initiation into Buddhism (pp. 24 - 26), and the negative and positive aspects of Buddhist morality (pp. 27 - 34). Book Two, though entitled "Philosophy", is a discussion of the four noble truths which form the very core of the Buddha's message, namely, the fact of suffering (pp. 37 f.), its cause (pp. 39 - 42), the cessation of suffering (pp. 43 f.), and the way leading to it (pp. 45 - 57). There are also discussions on some of the subtle philosophic concepts elaborated by Buddhist thinkers of later times (e.g., *anicca*, i.e., *anitya*, "impermanence", *anatta*, i.e., *anatman*, "negation of self", etc.). Part Three is an eminently practical introduction to

Buddhist meditation, including a sketch of the preliminaries (pp. 61 - 64), subjects of meditation (pp. 65 - 73), *samatha* or concentration (pp. 74 - 80), and *vipassana* or analytical insight (pp. 81 - 84). The body of the book comes to a close with a recapitulation of the practical conclusions to be drawn from the study of the *Way*.

A most welcome feature of the present work is a series of appendices giving extracts from Pali sources and details regarding the main Buddhist traditions and their allocations in the world, the main festivals, shrines and finally chronology (pp. 91 - 129). There is a glossary (pp. 132 f.) followed by an index (pp. 134 - 39). The addition of a glossary wherein Pali technical terms are explained is quite appropriate, for the average reader in the west and in the east, even when he may have some acquaintance with popular works on Buddhism, will not have knowledge in depth of the basic concepts.

The work is addressed primarily to the western reader who desires to acquire first-hand knowledge of the Buddha's teachings. Despite this modest claim of the author, the fact remains that the book is of value for the scholar and specialist; this writer for one has gained valuable insights from Saddhatissa's work. Frequent reference is made to Christian traditions, but the author is careful to accentuate those specific features of Buddhism which serve to set it apart as a *unique* way, a way that is quite different and distinct from Christianity (and for that matter from Judaism and Islam). One also meets with, in the present work, the drug-happy hippie and the youth who experiments with the LSD; the author is well aware of modern youth's problems, and the solution he has to offer is the Buddha's way.

The professors in our seminaries will find the book quite useful. It would be a great tragedy if the minister of the Church in India is not closely acquainted with the thought of the greatest of the sons of India. And at a time when so much emphasis is being laid on the horizontal aspect of Christian living, there is need to keep intact the vertical dimension, or the dimension of depth, and in this endeavour the techniques of meditation developed by Buddhist monks through the centuries can be of great help to Christian believers.

In this review it is not possible to go into the details of the book or to point out possibilities of interpretation other than those proposed by Dr. Saddhatissa. The way being a popular book, one does not hope to find listed in the bibliography basic works such as Hermann Oldenberg's *Buddha Sein Leben, seine Lehre seine Gemeinde* (13th ed. by Helmuth von Glasenapp, Stuttgart 1959), Etienne Lamotte's *Histoire du bouddhisme indien. I: Des origines à l'ère Saka* (Bibliothèque du Muséon 43, Louvain, 1958 repr., 1967), etc. However, the bibliography should have included the following publications which are of great value: Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Buddhism, a Non-Theistic Religion*, With a Selection from Buddhist Scriptures by H. Bechert, Transl. from the German by I. Schloegl (London, 1970); A. K. Warder, *Iadian Buddhism* (Delhi, 1970); two earlier classics which one can never forget are Georg Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha* (Delhi, 1969), and René Grousset, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*. Transl. from the French by M. Leon (London, 1932, repr. 1970).

Any study of Buddhism brings one face to face with a number of problems, to which even the absolute beginner must in all honesty be introduced. In a footnote mention should have been made of the view that the Buddha was of Mongolian stock; another detail that could have been mentioned is the tradition regarding the master's death, namely that he fell ill after partaking of a meal consisting of pork, rice, etc., and died of dysentery. More important still is the Buddha's dependence upon the earlier traditions of India: true, his teaching represents an original synthesis which, however, has its sources in the traditions of the Vedas and the Upanishads reference should also have been made to the problem of the *ipsissima verba* of the master: we can never be sure that the particular utterance we have before us in the Pali scriptures is an original saying of the Enlightened One. Finally there is a conventional way of citing biblical texts, which is certainly much better than *Corinthians*, I, 13, III-V (cf. p. 33, n. 1). This last point is a minor one, but this is not the case with the problems here indicated. It is better that the non-specialist, in the course of his study, be made cognizant of problems, for otherwise he may come to know them through other sources and then may begin to suspect that some details had been withheld from him on set purpose, or may get confused.

The above remarks do not in any way diminish the merits of Dr. Saddhatissa's book, for after all they concern only matters of scholarship. The present writer's advice to any one who happens to read this review is *tolle et lege*, "take and read." The book is well printed, attractively bound, and moderately priced; the specimens of Buddhist iconography are well chosen: the reader can spend hours contemplating the element of tranquillity and peace emanating from the face of the Enlightened One.

Calvary,
Trichur - 680004

Dr K. Luke

Contributors

DR JOHN B. CHETHIMATTAM is Rector and Professor, Dharmaram College, Bangalore.

DR. NORBERT KLAES from Germany is now doing research in Banares Hindu University. His recent study on the moral teaching of the Mahabharata is now in the press.

THOMAS KOCHUMUTTAM took his M. A. in philosophy from Poona University, specializing in Buddhism, and Hindu traditions.

JOSE KURIEDATH is doing his M. A. in philosophy at the Delhi University.

THOMAS MANICKAM has completed his Doctorate studies at the Benares Hindu University and is a frequent contributor to this review.

DR LUCIUS NEREPARAMBIL is professor of Sacred Scripture, at Dharmaram College, Bangalore.

DR T. M. THOMAS who took his Doctorate in Education is professor at the Bridgeport University, U. S. A. This article is a chapter from his forthcoming book *Image of Man in Education*.

